

CINEMA

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DOLAN PRESENTS BY
MICHAEL ROBERTSON'S
"BACK OF BEYOND"

Papers

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No. 102

AFC SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT / **LEO** LEE TAMAHORI'S 'ONCE WERE WARRIORS'
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Paper

- AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION SUPPLEMENT

54 **CATHY ROBINSON- CHIEF COFFINER** is leaving the desert. www.fox.com

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Figures: calculated success model using two months by HWF (pale blue), mid-40s (dark blue), and 50s (light blue). The model shows a significant increase in success rate for the 50s group, particularly in the 40s and 50s age groups. The 40s group shows a significant increase in success rate, particularly in the 40s and 50s age groups. The 50s group shows a significant increase in success rate, particularly in the 40s and 50s age groups.



Film Finance Corporation to revive Feature Film Fund

John Morris, Chief Executive of the Australian Film Finance Corporation (FFC), announced in September that the FFC would be able to fund for the financing of up to three feature films. The closing date for applications is 31 March 1989.

Morris said that the decision of the FFC Board to revive the Film Fund was in response to a discussion with the industry. He said that in the discussion of the Fund the FFC had also taken into account views of the industry regarding the selection process. The Board had decided to drop the preliminary test for an Australian distributor and the involvement of sales agents in selecting the projects. Acknowledging the important role of Australian-based sales agents in the industry, Morris said the FFC would expect the producer to appoint an Australian sales agent at his or her choice.

Throughout the Fund, the FFC will finance up to three feature films with budgets between \$1.5 and \$5.5 million. Morris said the Fund was targeted at relatively inexperienced producers. Decisions would have to take some genre or documentary experience but not more than five feature films. Directors might be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Morris said that filmmakers in general are entitled to apply to the fund, but the FFC reserves the right to require an experienced producer to be associated to the project.

Morris said the FFC Board had decided to appoint a panel of three industry experts — a writer, a director and a producer — who would short list all applications. Interviews short listed applicants and make recommendations to the FFC Board for its final selection. The membership of the panel has not yet been determined. Morris said he would be appointing appropriate industry representatives shortly.

The FFC expects decisions on projects to be made by 30 June 1989. Only an exceptionally high number of applications will exceed this timetable.

Morris emphasized that the role of the Fund was to fill in the gap between the low budget feature film financed by the Australian Film Commission and higher budgeted films financed under the FFC's normal funding guidelines. Morris indicated that projects would be judged on the scripts submitted and that the FFC would not be preparing any further script development.

Australian Writers' Guild Mentorship Programme

Marlene Levine, a Mentor for Screen work, who is in Cinema Studies School of Arts and Music Faculty of Humanities, LaTrobe University, has been elected South Wales Film & Television Off on Australian Writers' Guild mentorship competition for best new writers. Her screenplay, "Dance in the Rain" features Anna Cheloveva.

Levine, who with one of two writers is currently selected from 300 finalists. Levine has received a cash award, and will receive another if a later stage in script development. She has been teamed up with a mentor as a professional screenwriter who will provide advice and guidance in developing the project based production has resulted in three projects, where 10 plays include *The Question of Remains*. Further, her screenplays include *Three Days Separated* and *Is the Future Intoxicating* for television, most recently episodes of *His Secret Life*.

Levine's mentor, English and Drama at Prince Anglican Girls' School.

New WA Screenwriters' Scheme

Screen West, the Western Australian Film and Television Office, advised that it would award up to six business or educational \$4,000 to new Western Australian screenwriters in 1988/89. Chief Executive Denis Anderson said:

The intent of the scheme was to discover and support promising writers who are new to the screen and display the potential to develop scripts, particularly in the area of low budget feature television and short films.

Sustained support on a one-to-one basis will be provided to successful short screenwriters or script editors to help successful applicants bring their projects to completion. Anderson believes that:

Scripting is only part of what is necessary for a new screenwriter. Being able to survive in the film industry is a major challenge. Such as an excellent screenwriter, as well as a producer. That's why the program will provide successful applicants with top notch script editing and a professional script workshop. In addition to this:

The Scheme, which closed for applications at the end of October, was open to writers who have no previous feature film or television credits, including those who could show evidence of script sales ideas and substantial writing skills.

Morris said that previously been funded for script development, but where projects are as yet unproduced, could apply. However, if successful they will only qualify to attend the intensive work shop following the first round of the selection process. They will not be eligible for the two and script editing/workshops of the scheme. Anderson explained that "There were writers funded in the past have often lost the opportunity to attend workshops and the often a chance to go in the context of at least the segment of the Scheme."

Applications will be assessed by a special panel appointed by the Screen West Board. This panel will include at least one member of the Australian

Writers' Guild and an accredited producer.

The last round of selection will be completed by early December. Following this, the Christmas work shop. Final selection will be early in the New Year.

Creative Nation

In October 1988 Prime Minister Paul Keating announced the launch of a government's "Creative Nation" policy.

Of particular interest to the film and television industry was the reference that of a \$20m fund to stimulate television production, \$10m for drama and investment in CD-ROM technology.

Coupled with the launch was news of Rupert Murdoch's 20th Century Fox planning to develop an international standard studio complex at the Sydney showgrounds. This prompted great interest, not only among NSW politicians (see below) and commentators, but in Victoria, where Premier Jeff Kennett vowed to try and convince Murdoch to relocate to Melbourne. Further development projects will be covered in Cinema Papers.

Movie Studio at Sydney Showgrounds

Proposals to establish a movie studio at the Sydney Showgrounds have been extensively developed by the New South Wales state government according to the Minister for the Arts, Peter Collins.

Collins said he had been meeting on the plan for the past 18 months. In close consultation with the film industry, this preparation had included a comprehensive first study of any project by the Panel Group for the NSW Ministry for the Arts and the NSW Film & Television Office, which covered issues such as potential market demand and the economic impact and benefits of the proposal.

I welcome the Prime Minister's comments (H. Collins) regarding the possible establishment of a studio at the Showgrounds, following his discussions with Mike Carrington.

The Prime Minister's office has also said that it is a matter for discussion with the NSW government, which owns the Showgrounds site.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Prime Minister and, in particular, the level of interest and support that he is showing to the project beyond his offer to assist with site preparation and development. Collins said setting up a multi-million dollar studio at the Showgrounds site would be a major boost for the film industry in NSW.

I am delighted that Twentieth Century Fox is showing a keen interest in the site. It is planned that following Collins' approval, the government would call for expressions of interest from the site.

CORRIGENDUM

On p. 10 of the article "Stephen Elliott: The Adventures of a Producer, Queen of the Desert", *Cinema Papers* No. 181, Caroline Hughes' name was misspelled. *Cinema Papers* apologises to Hughes for this error.

NOTICE TO READERS

Due to a combination of poor printing and editorial misjudgments, the printed quality of the previous issue of *Cinema Papers* was somewhat short of the standard the publishers had no doubt intended to expect.

Cinema Papers takes this opportunity to sincerely apologise to all its readers, except those the problems are being resolved with either a (hopefully) higher quality reprint or a copy of the issue which is not in circulation.

The sole dissent to the united front of enthusiasm greeting the New Commission, which worried that the images of a spectral, rain-soaked glossy brochures. Imagine their delight, then, at the opening shot of

LEE TAMAHORI's

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE SOUTH SEAS



Zealand release of Jane Campion's *The Piano* came from the Tourist
landscape might cut across the fables so carefully constructed in its
Lee Tamahori's *Once Were Warriors* which features a panorama of
the Southern Alps – a picture of scenic land at its most rhapsodic.

THE WARRIORS

REPORT BY BRENT LEWIS

Their delight lasted just seconds, however, for the camera pulls away and exposes the pristine view as merely a billboard ironically planted amid a channel house of urban dereliction and billowing clouds of noxious fumes.

Given that the film deals with becoming literary rather a dysfunctional family, *Once Were Warriors* was always going to be a contentious film, as, so, too, the most debated novel in New Zealand literary history, suggested as much. Written by Alan Dyll, a provocative pan-excellence who's never happier than when spelling out repulsive truths, the book's success (30,000 copies) occurred despite its unrelenting darkness and scenes of consciousness style.

Some books are best left untold, as Alan Pakula and Boris de Palma have masterfully observed in the wake of *Topher's Choice* (1982) and *The Roughie of the Vampires* (1996). If Lee Tamahori is ever to have such thoughts in his head, such an idea might be his last film, he didn't let it show. "You have to meet yourself again as new challenges", he says. "I prefer to work out how to beat the obstacles rather than settle for making a grade class movie."

At 44, Tamahori is far from a cinematic novice. Director of innumerable commercial work (he's done all the major movies, but gotten it a between 200 and 300), Tamahori, along with Geoff Brown, is regarded as the most desirous practitioner of the form in New Zealand, as is evident from the numerous Australian Television Film Awards that grace the



MAKING: LEFT TO RIGHT: TAMAHORI, BROWN, AND DILL
WITH THE MAORI WRITERS (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) TAMAHORI
(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) TAMAHORI, BROWN, AND DILL
(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) TAMAHORI, BROWN, AND DILL

Once Were Warriors

office in Flying Fish, the company Taniwha started in 1986. "Everyone else was giving their companies movie-related titles, but this was too trite. It seemed a name that would give us a good logo and that people would remember."

Commercials are always trying to work their magic for popular recognition and Taniwha has an extensive track record in making his mark out. The range of subject matter is matched by a diversity of treatment. There's the do-beatsome piece which celebrates the 1990 Commonwealth Games by evoking, in black and white, the Aussie camaraderie of World War I, then cuts, in colour, to the jubilation of athletes massed together in homage to Vincent Wood's *Vigil* (1988), the *Andromeda* series which cast an amiable eye at modern relationships and the commercials which celebrated 150 years of New Zealand's accession by capturing the shared enjoyment of two passengers, one Maori and one Pakeha (European).

There's also the series that became part of Kiwi consciousness and made television part of the fabric of shared experiences: Taniwha.

Television One gave me a brief which I thought was terrible, so I said, 'Let's do The Incredible Journey about a dog who finds his way home.'

Within a fortnight the length of New Zealand and put Louis Armstrong's 'It's a Wonderful World' as the soundtrack. People loved it.

At times, Taniwha's commercials seem that in some way Nevet stays enough to hard-sell a product, they are, he says, character sketches. A good example is the masterly vignette of two friends in mellow mood as they talk a long a rural back road. The end title says "Taniwha", otherwise you'd never know.

Taniwha feels making commercials

is the best training ground of all, and certainly better than going to film school. There's no point in discussing how to build a house, you have to go a hammer and mark and build one.

Commercials are microcosmic stories, they teach you incredibly subtle storytelling skills.

Commercials directors are always psycho-bled: you're paid in cash, style as models. I've been lucky to be cloned into perform neo-driven commercials, which is the best apprenticeship if you're thinking of directing a feature some day.

Taniwha dates his directorial experiences back to 1984:

Around then the two studio possibilities were running out and overprint was running around pricing as many films as they could make. A lot of films that were made shouldn't have been. Then there was noise that wasn't that should have been. I guess you'd include noise in the latter category.

Taniwha grins. "Actually, I had the dream but not the project. I started making commercials around then and honed my skills."

Taniwha's reputation was such that if you asked anyone in the industry which sectors in writing, directing and to make the big one, they invariably replied, "Lee Taniwha".

ONCE WERE WARRIORS

Taniwha didn't read *Once Were Warriors* with that much-delayed feature in mind, but to put in the national debate. *Warriors* had the nation divided over its conviction that a people who once were warriors had become a perpetually underclass thanks to welfare dependency. Man Duff conveyed the story



presents alcoholism and violence as that had a long way to go as a contrast.

So the parties ended, all over. Five bloody days, my, man. And people, every man and woman pack them, they were thinking this must be life but it's a life, you know — I got yet something, not quite saying. Ah, but who gets a kick? Drink up and be happy. And if you wanta fight go to it, too. Might even put you a little good!

Pages of such staccato outpourings left Taniwha, himself a Maori, feeling "acutely depressed". He also edited the book, then had a second shot and made it through.

When producer Robin Schuler approached Taniwha to make it as a movie, he knew that, if the book's *Warriors* remained intact on screen, it would supply cinema quaters then you could say better.

An initial script by Duff suggested the writer was too close to his material to be objective about it. Taniwha felt the answer lay in giving it to a woman writer to shake the focus from the out-of-control Jake Haka to Beth, the unimpeachable survivor, and thus allow the movie to evolve of the book.

It needed a woman in the centre. Beth's story is truly heroic. She stands up to Jake, and the beating he gives her, because she wants to create a life for her children. I know that audience who were repelled by the world as *Warriors* would be repelled by that.

Taniwha credits Maori playwright Rewa Brown, who wrote the screenplay, with bringing optimism to a story of otherwise unrelenting gloom. The moments where the children discover their father isn't in the novel, yet they support hope for a tomorrow that would otherwise seem doomed to replicate the nihilism that corrupts their elders.



TAMAHORI: "It needed a woman at the centre. Beth's story is truly heroic. She stands up to Jake, and the beatings he gives her, because she wants to create a life for her children. I knew that audiences who were repelled by the world in *Warriors* would be moved by that."

LEFT: JAKE (JAMES NEAVE) AND BETH (JANE FARRAR) IN *THE WARRIORS*; JANE FARRAR AND JAMES NEAVE IN *THE WARRIORS*; JANE FARRAR AND JAMES NEAVE IN *THE WARRIORS*

The efficacy which propels the film is also suggestive of some thing made on the run – "on the gallop", quips Stuart Dryburgh, whose haunting cinematography also graced *The Poems*.

Rather than a burden, the film's tight \$24.2 million budget and rapid six-week shoot were a spur to Tamahori, who brought it in under budget. "I hate waiting like stock, so I follow Jake Ford's technique of pre-shooting a sequence in my head."

Tamahori's initial apprehension that his commercial background might disqualify him from feature filmmaking was quickly disproved.

Because you're up performing in sight on commercials, I was genuinely worried that, if I did this as a film, too, I'd find myself burnt out with a story of only 45 minutes.

Jake's turned out to be groundless. I discovered that doing commercials all the time keeps your craft level very sharp and ready for a commercial-scale feature like *Warriors*. Secondly, too, there was a feeling of luxury in not having to tell a story as described.

The experience hasn't spoilt



Tamahori, who has made more than 15 commercials in the months since finishing the film.

Given his past record of heroes – Sam Peckinpah, Don Siegel, Sergio Leone, de Palma, Martin Scorsese and even Quentin Tarantino – it is no surprise to hear Tamahori likes violence as nature, "because that's where it belongs". One can almost hear Tarantino laughing in agreement.

With such generations as his inspiration, one might have envisaged *Clear View Warriors* emerging as a sanguinary bit of showmanship. Yet, while there's no attempt to camouflage the violence, it isn't exploitative.

This movie partly lets us watch a number of Tamahori's heroes. Ken Loach: "Throughout the filming, I kept asking: How would Loach want the violence to damage the victims? I didn't want it to have a pervasively gruesome twist."

Tamahori exercised his judgment when deciding how to depict the rape of a terrified teenage girl by a man she knows as her uncle.

How the rape has something sadistic to it because it's a close family bond whispering tones of incestuous while he violates her.

I thought a long time about how to convey that horror and I decided to stay with the camera as these faces in extreme close-up. Chien director might have wanted it to cut away, but I decided to go the whole director.

It was an approach Tamahori used throughout the movie, ensuring anything as sensational couldn't possibly appeal to the cheap-thrills brigade.

Jake Fike's truly frightening metamorphosis into a fighting beast totally convinced us as audiences is, Tamahori states, not fictional contrivance; he knows because he has seen such people in their natural habitat.

In the 1970s, I was hanging out with a drinking, drug-taking fraternity which lived in the seclusion and lowest levels of where even today we were in.

There were always fights breaking out when strangers came in. Their's message to those fights other than people don't like you if that happens, you're history.

At the beginning of the movie, the long-hair who bumps over three guys picks a fight for no reason.

In the book, you'll find that Jake loves violence, you couldn't put that in the movie and I didn't really want to.

If his rough early days provided one reference point for the brawl that are spread through the movie, then the New Zealand film industry in the person of the lovelorn main character called Anne Wallace (best known for portraying the imaginary maverick *Ti Woake* in Geoff Murphy's *Ure*, 1983) provided the other.

In the film, I modelled a lot of Jake's behaviour as Zac. On *Ure*, he lost up one of the carpenters and his behaviour was just as vicious as *The Silent One* (Viggo Mortensen, 1984).

When Zac fights – if you can call it fighting – he has the other guy with as many blows as possible until he's unconscious. I have seen him channel people for absolutely no reason. Did he apologise later? That'll be the day!

Zac comes from the hardscrabble background, he spent eight years in maximum security.

I like Zac; he's a really good actor, and, if he had been six years younger, I may well have used him for Jake. There's no doubt how well he'd have understood it as

Once Were Warriors



ABOVE: WITH JUSTIN DREIFUS; LEFT: LISA FIEDLER; RIGHT: THOMPSON; BELOW: ONCE WERE WARRIORS

Jake has no redeeming qualities: he beats his wife when she's not happily serving to the Lord and Mission, has no conception of what it means to be a father, and likes surrounding himself with men who share his love of alcohol and fight. Yet Tamahoro always knew there wasn't risk Jake would be seen as a positive role model by those destined to tread the same path.

I've been to audiences who shatter when he punches his cousin, but what can you do about guys like that? If they fail to see the inherent message in this film, then they'll fail to see anything.

Yet I know that some of those guys are cheering with a kind of false bravado because they are profoundly disturbed by what they see: a mirror image of themselves. Of course, no-one else will ever know that as they have a tough media image they've never going to let drop, and that's a real tragedy.

Yes, the main on wife getting a leg up as they watching the film doesn't feel the same way and that's some sort of victory.

Tamahoro is proud to have made a film that penetrates the dark side of the human soul, yet is free of ambiguity. "I would have to be guilty of creating a scene that was pessimistic or confusing to people."

Tamahoro's proud, too, to have made a film that is New Zealand has helped to move drama and become a case of life. To Dr. Mike Abbott, immediate past President of the World Federation of Mental Health and for nine years Director of the New Zealand Mental Health Foundation.

Once Were Warriors has not only reopened the debate on the seemingly intractable problem of domestic violence, but it's enabled ordinary people to face the problems that lives. From

anecdotal evidence, it's clear that just seeing it has helped a lot of people.

Although the arguments thrown up at the time Dreiff's book was published suggested the film would leave its mark, Tamahoro "never expected it would become a sociology of document." Not did he expect it toying with Steven Spielberg's Jurassic Park as New Zealand's highest grossing movie event.

Above, the reaction has been equally remarkable. From that such an uncompromising depiction of social malaise would attract audiences have been disproved by the reaction at a succession of film festivals. Loaded in Cannes, cited in Doha and Montreal, it has turned out to be a landmark film for a New Zealand film industry anxious to replicate on The Power, but destined not to homogenise its product.

For Tamahoro, the unqualified success of Once Were Warriors has led him to consider his next project. The more ambitious (and expensive) project "I Shall Not Die" is based on the extraordinary life of the 19th-Century Maori chief, Te Koro, who was also a native of the Pacific and military strategy, a man of great discipline and the leader of an impoverished army that fought with the strategic skill of Napoleon. Tamahoro believes that financing will take over "the book of a Maori", so in the interim he plans to make an as-yet-untitled international love story.

Tamahoro's enthusiasm for movie-making will not waver. It something of the ten-year-old boy who saw The Game of Navarone (J. Lee Thompson, 1961) and decided that, if a filmmaker could get men to walk up cliffs and blow up guns, then that had to be the ideal job. In twenty years, he's now he'll reach the same conclusion.

1. Alan Dreiff, Once Were Warriors, Tardis, Auckland, 1993, p. 12



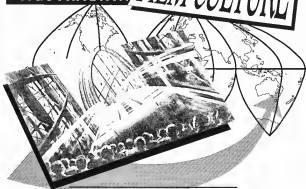
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MICHAEL KOLLER

Waterfall

ARTHER AND CORINNE CASTRILLI
1984, 88MIN, 16 MM, 1984

Waterfall is a true *film-musée*: an Australian film as an artwork, dominated by "artistic/art" ideas from America or "serious" works from Europe, a short film in a culture which values art and discusses mainly feature films, a serious, formal, experimental work at a time when structural works are in disrepute.

Humorous, linear, narrative, easy-to-digest (the word "entertaining" is relevant) experimental films are more likely to be given credibility, to be written about, to be acceptability were a virtue. This can be seen as a reaction against the structuralist and semiological works of the recent past which were often both hostile and overly long. However, the Castrelli's works should not be confused with these films as theirs are formal rather than structural. They may require a different frame of reference to mainstream cinema, but this is what makes the films experimental.

Ross Gibson states in issue no. 100 of *Cinema Papers*, "Square Rhythms is particularly difficult to describe in words." This is the problem which exists for works of an experimental nature: they are difficult to analyse. Most of the analysis of experimental works consists of either straight descriptions of what is seen on the screen, or an explanation of the technological process involved in the filmmaking. It is often difficult to explain the comprehensive and/or intellectual reason one has for the works. If the films are abstract, there are no themes which can be analysed. The best experimental (and other) films are works which need to be experienced. Comme ça, as Sam Fuller said, "Fronzo."

Waterfall is ten years old. Some film publications and the majority of the articles are about new films. Film culture is about an appraisal of the latest, a constant consumption. There seems to be an unwillingness to discuss older works and reviewers seem to be unwilling to re-view these films as well. Retrospective programmes are less and less able to attract audiences. This can be illustrated by the relatively poor reception at the BFI Paper Headstock Retrospectives at the Melbourne International Film Festival.

To compound this problem, *Waterfall* is made by filmmakers with a substantial body of work dating back to the early 1960s. In an era when only the latest technologies and the newest filmmakers are considered of value, old is old but. As Sight and Sound notes in the August 1994 issue, "The phrase 'young film makers' carries a serious meaning. Not so 'old film makers', although these are obviously more of them around."

Yet the Castrelli continue to survive as filmmakers and continue to publish the extraordinary Castrelli Filmworks. They are the veterans and it is due to their vision, their tenacity and

their love of film that they continue to survive and thrive in an era of filmmaking where few people do anymore. Very few Australian filmmakers of any era have a body of work comparable to theirs and that is what makes *Waterfall* worthy of serious discussion. It draws attention to the art of the Castrelli, and illustrates their concerns and working practices.

Waterfall is an 18-minute sound film made by Arthur and Corinne Castrelli in 1984. It is a three-colour separation study of Mackenzie Falls in the Grampians, Victoria. The red, green and blue separations were shot on 16mm black and white negative, and were printed with colour filtration onto Eastmancolor print stock. Due to the time differences between the filming of the three parts of superimposed film, there are slight changes in movement between the three exposures. The colour appears to film around the edges of the leaves on the trees, the grass, the waves and the splashes of water.

In this early three-colour separation work (*Waterfall* is their fourth such colour-separation study), the Castrelli were careful to base it on little movement in the frame so possible, leaving the technical intricacies. But by 1979 they began superimposing more and more movement to further develop the time-colour relationship. *Waterfall* is the most dynamic of these three-colour separation series.

One of the most extreme examples of the lack of recognition of the separation occurs towards the end of the film, when tourists, viewed in the distance, who are visiting the Mackenzie Falls, appear as three sets of ghostly figures. This illustrates the ephemeral nature of human activity and the irrelevance of humans to much of the Castrelli's work. If humans are present, they are usually shapes with no life of their own beyond the temporal and spatial limits of the film. In the inanimate objects, the rocks, which are bold and full colour. These have a permanent quality.

As Arthur Castrelli states in issue 45/46 of *Cinema Filmworks*, a slow shutter speed was a feature of 19th-Century still photography. This created a blurring of any images in which movement occurred, and especially of waterfalls in which each image was not a representation of individual drops (or falls) of water so much as a representation of the volume of water which had fallen before the camera during the period of the exposure. With these three-colour separations, the Castrelli have reversed this effect, and the blurred rush of the water can be seen as a metaphor for the vertical movement of film through a film projector.

As an extension of the above, *Waterfall* can also be seen as a homage to the early development of colour motion picture film. In 1914, the Castrelli visited the Eastman House Museum of Photography at Rochester, U.S. They were impressed by the display of early work in colour photography and film, and, in 1976, with Three Colour Separation Studies - Landscapes, they began exploring the first three-colour system to be used in still photography.

The principles of photographic reproduction of colours were first described by Clerk Maxwell in 1855. He showed that if three negatives are taken through red, blue and green filters, the negatives yield positives which, if projected through their appropriate red, blue and green filters and superimposed on a screen, will give a picture of natural colours. There are methods by which this can be achieved in the movies. One is an additive process, the other a subtractive. The first three-colour (and two-colour) films were made with the additive process and consisted of recording and projecting three (or two) consecutive images.

Initially, these images were recorded on separate frames of film, but eventually a process was developed which halved three (or two) small images to occupy a single frame area. All of these processes suffered from defects such as colour fringing, due to a lack of registration of the component images projected through multiple lenses (resulting in an effect similar to that which the *Caravilla* achieve in *Waterfall*), and poor definition.

In earlier two-colour processes, where the camera was run at 12 frames per second (double the normal silent film speed) — another innovation with *Waterfall*), and alternative frames were projected through a rotating filter disc, the two consecutive images were merged by the persistence of vision. But fringing occurred on moving images due to the slight difference between consecutive images.

The *Caravilla*'s deep knowledge of the history of the early cinema reinforces and reflects their desire to rediscover the nature of the recorded image. This film's allusion to tinting is another example of this. Before colour film, the hand colouring of images, known as tinting, was used, and the ingenious hand application of colour to still images — either photographs or movie frames — caused a blending of two images reminiscent of the fringing of colour in *Waterfall*.

A portion of *Waterfall* was filmed in slow motion at 12 fps (half normal sound speed) and down to as slow as 10 to 1 fps using the time-exposure facility on their spring wound Bolex Bolex camera and a greatly reduced f stop. When these images are projected, the image of the water is speeded up. During these moments of the film, the camera is in close to medium shot, and the sound of the waterfall is very loud, obscuring any other ambient noises.

The sound with the film tends to follow a relatively traditional notion of the function of a soundtrack. The sound is a 'real time' mix of the noise at the waterfall, depending on the distance or distance from the waterfall. At a distance, other bush noises are discernible. Up close, the deafening roar of the water obliterates all other sounds. Perhaps the conventional use of the soundtrack acts as a hook for spectators in search of a more traditional film form, thereby allowing them to appreciate the unique nature of the *Caravilla*'s approach to filmmaking.

What the *Caravilla* have achieved throughout their cinema as filmmakers, through persistently questioning and exploring the medium of film, is a portrait of the essence of the films experience. They have identified film as a malleable art form, one in which nothing has to be what it seems. They manipulate light and transform film stock so that they can look at familiar objects and

perceive them in ways which can reveal texture, shape, light and movement and elucidate new meanings.

The *Caravilla* display a love of film which sees them regularly attending a wide variety of film screenings. They are aware of the expressive power of the components of film, something which the great mainstream filmmakers are also aware of. As Caravilla has stated, "We want to create a new awareness of visual and aural beauty."

But beyond being filmmakers interested in the history and processes of the cinema, the *Caravilla* are also great poets of the Australian landscape. Their films feature many of the landscape spots of Australia: the Gumpases, Uluru, Stradbroke Island, Cockatoo Pde, Katarina (The Cliffs), Ellerslie, and Point Lookout.

Much of this work was made in the mid-period of their career. These films came away from the discouraging approach of the earlier works to a more mature, more conscious type approach to film, a more sensitive, sensitive and reflective attitude towards filmmaking.

The three-colour studies can be seen as a dissection of the elements of film images. This is a process of discovering images: a separation of sound and image in these films creates an accumulation of the emotional impact of the work. It is simple in

appearance yet its ramifications are complex. The visual concept both as a film constrains an artist's content.

It is impossible to understand *Waterfall* without seeing it in its entirety. The meaning of the film is instantly bound to the visual elements of each image and cannot be adequately verbalized. The landscape images portrayed in the film have subtle differences and the structure of the film makes us aware of the differences. The camera examines the rocks, the bushes and the water, and combines them so that the viewer can experience the colour, texture and power of nature.

The *Caravilla* found that, by using a three-colour separation process, they achieved startlingly realistic colour, superior to ordinary tripack film stock, with several displacements of colour occurring when there was movement in the frame.

These observations can only be made on film, and with a relatively positive print. Most of the emotional power and strength of the film would be lost by viewing *Waterfall* on video or on a heavily scratched or faded print. Television would alter the colour of the film and would destroy the impact of the texture of the film. One could speculate on the connection between this and the well-known dislike by the *Caravilla* for television and video. It should also be recognized that this work is a three-colour separation. Teleview/Video uses a different colour addition process and is the only major form of film process. All of the other major colour processes are three-colour subtractive processes.

Author's note: Two major studies were conducted in viewing this piece. Arthur Caravilla's "Waterfall" is in the 1974 film *Caravilla's Filmworks*, and Barbara Philo's study titled "The Caravilla — The Art of Seeing", in *Moviehouse: A History Exhibition of the Filmwork by Arthur and Clarence Caravilla*, 1983/1977.

Editor's Note: Due to distance, space and other circumstances (mostly, this is a technical misreading of "I don't We Love"). Next month's will be happy than usual to compensate.



BACK of

REPORT BY ANDREW L. URBAN

Paul Mercurio is Torn, a man out of place and time, haunted by an event in the past, who lives at an isolated petrol station in the outback. Travellers pass by; some stay in a tense situation none can break free from. There is Connor (Colin Firth), the bad guy, his offender, Nick (John Polson), and the "young, desirable woman", Charlie (Dorothy Smart).

Back of the Minibike is the third feature (after *The Best of Friends*, 1981, and *Going Some*, 1987) of Michael Robertson, a highly-successful director of television commercials.

Robertson first got into filmmaking as a writer of sponsored documentaries, and graduated through that to working at Film Australia. From there he went into the advertising and public relations world. It wasn't "that big a step" to start producing television commercials as one of the major agencies in Australia, now called Young and Rubicam.

"Outback Australia: an ancient land
filled with infinite beauty and eternal mystery;
the magical place where a young man's searching
for spiritual fulfilment becomes an emotional
awakening of the heart and soul. It is a journey
to back of beyond."

MICHAEL ROBERTSON'S BEYOND

Robertson: I learnt very early on that I could work with 35mm and large budgets, but I could manipulate — as a poet — filmmaking styles and that I could be paid for it. That can only happen in commercials.

Some of my contemporaries said "Robbie has sold out", because we were all there in the mid 1980s making student and indie films. I'm referring to people like Philip Meyer and Peter Weir, who were all contemporaries of mine at Film Australia. I was the first one to decide it was going to be too hard to live the real thing, although they have been very successful, and good luck to them.

I moved into another field, and it's easier longer for me. This is only my third feature. I'd never given up the idea of getting back into it, it was just a matter of picking the right moment and the right project.

Robertson had developed a reputation as commercialist for doing a lot of comedy work and, in 1980, the then New South Wales Film Commission ran a comedy competition. Donald MacDonald and Robertson submitted a script called "The Rev of Friends", which ended up winning first prize.



ROBERTSON (LEFT) WITH HIS FIRST FILM, "THE REV OF FRIENDS", AND A SECOND FILM, "THE REV OF FRIENDS", WHICH WON THE 1980 NEW SOUTH WALES FILM COMMISSION COMPETITION.



Back of Beyond

There was almost a commitment that the NSWFC make the award-winning script, which it did. Robertson shot it in 1983 and it had an Aussie box release with Hoyty's year later. Robertson

I can recall it did about six weeks in Sydney and was quite successful. It sold overseas, particularly in Europe.

I thought I would probably move onto another project, but it took me time to get the next one going. The reason was my involvement in the advertising world.

In 1986, Robertson was asked by the NSWFC, and an executive producer called John Sandilands, whether he would direct a picture called *Going South*.

It was very heavily autobiographical, relating very closely to John's life. It was a mid-life comedy, a story of a man who rises in his corporate career and goes off looking for another life.

This picture was distributed by Cinema Line. Unfortunately, it was very poorly handled in the marketing end, but I won't go into that now.

Robertson considers *Back of Beyond* a big departure, being almost eight years to the day since he did his previous feature.

It's a picture I think has the more chances of commercial success, simply because of three ingredients: the quality of the script, the quality of the cast, and the method and production values that we were achieving.

Robertson came up with the idea of a love story set in the outback while living in Los Angeles, contrasting the television commercial's career and seeing whether he "could get a film idea up and running in what is supposed to be the centre of the film industry in the English-speaking world".

Robertson put together a treatment, and then started (at various stages) Paul London, Rick J. Sawyer and Anne Brockbank to write the script.

I don't call myself a screenwriter. There was also a time factor involved, given my heavy workload. It would have been very difficult to cut myself right away and concentrate, which one has to do when writing.

Robertson also found the three writers brought new and different qualities to the concept. "All these elements are very valuable and are still in the film.

Judging from a read of the screenplay, *Back of Beyond* has three strong elements: a love story, a spiritual and mystical element, and a hard edge that lies edge. These potentially disparate elements come together first of all in a geographical sense in a desolate, poor station. The love content is between the lead characters, Tom, and Charlie; the thriller aspect is brought about by the introduction of a bad guy, Connor, and the mystical element which pervades the whole thing - the outback, the Aboriginals - comes through the location.

Robertson doesn't see the film as being of a particular genre, but adds that "the strongest thing coming through it is the love story."

Given Robertson needed the film in Los Angeles, attempting to speculate that the film represents a (slightly) cinematic view of the Australian outback.

It's a combination of things, of which that is one.

Audience would be my looking to do films that people want to see. The subject is where it is the story are very much key downwards for the project. Everyone enjoys the love story. The thriller elements there, and then wrapped around this mystical quality that the Australian outback brings.

Describing it like that it sounds as if Robertson had a recipe, went into the cupboard, took out the elements and then mixed them together. He disagrees:

It didn't happen that way. The industry is littered with stories of projects that are packaged with a particular thing in mind, and as many are successful as failures.

This picture is a commercial project. There is no strong art involved in it. It's a picture that draws upon all the elements that we can put to it, such as Paul Mercurio. He is undoubtedly a major drawcard, both here and on the international scene.

We have very strong performances. Colin Friels is probably one of the best male actors in Australia today - if not the best. And Steven Cohn and Paul we have the stunning women (Dor



LEFT: A DESERT MAN AND A GROOMING G. ROBERTSON (TOP RIGHT), JOHN TURTURRO (BOTTOM LEFT), JOHN TURTURRO (BOTTOM RIGHT), AND JOHN TURTURRO (BOTTOM RIGHT) OF WESTERN

Smugly, when I am tapping west 'ole with a much longer. She will be taken by someone overseas.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the script is the way that Tom is portrayed as a kind of spiritual figure. Robertson also uses his motorcycle as a metaphor for the theme of the Western: "Yes, that's a true analogy of where we are."

In fact, Robertson has been quoted as saying the film will have the power of *Unforgiven* (Clint Eastwood, 1992) and the mystic cast of *Ghost* (Jerry Zuckerman, 1990).

Well, I'm a great admirer of Clint Eastwood and his Westerns. This film has the dangerous edge that he brings to his pictures, that element of the mystical and strange. His characters are often out of touch with time. Certainly the Mexican character is out of time and out of place. That's one of the reasons I love the analogy.

The second is *Ghost*. Well, that's something I wanted to, though you'll have seen the film to realize what I'm talking about. There is a novel in the story which makes you go on to find it's very reminiscent of the novel in *The Crying Game* (Neil Jordan, 1993) which they managed to keep quiet, though it's not a sexual reference.

In the opening sequence, Tom's little sister is killed in a motorcycle accident. The girl Tom finds is a major driver for the rest of what happens to him. Robertson uses a parallel in the end to resolve that girl with *Unforgiven*.

Tom has to resolve that girl and the manner they do it is through the revelation who came along the road, just the garage, not at his beckoning, but just arrive.

I suggest you could call the film *The Rider*, but being a "Rider" has the wrong connotation in the United States.

Another picture that has strong connotations for Robertson is *Kay Lapse* (John Huston, 1948).

You have characters drawn to a central spot, not exactly of their own volition, and then they have to stay. In *Back of Beyond*, four key characters are thrown together and none of them can stay. They have to remain under the roof of this one place.

One of the key characters is Connor, the buddy.

Connor is a man who is a couple of years out of class, as you can see from his wardrobe and physical appearance. He is a man who would have come up from the wrong side of the tracks, and he's always just missed on the big deal.

The deal in this film is the biggest he's had in his life, and he is on the edge of pulling it off. He knows that, we all know it.

When you get to the end of the story, you feel quite sorry for him. At the same time, he is a character who allows Tom to move closer to the woman.

It's a little difficult for me to talk about this, because the moment you start talking about the characters, you start talking of the plot, and I don't want to give away the meat.

The incredible question is: How is this delicate balance achieved, going to affect the way the filmmakers market or stage position the film?

There is a word that is used a lot in Australia at the moment, quickly. One could say it's a quickly subtextual comment with a point, but I'm not having a lot of impact on that area.

The one area that we all seem to be an agreement is to try and build back on some of the plot, so that he has a chance to get on head above water in the market.

Robertson has brought many questions to his own filmmaking, from his background in television commercials.

If you are going to successfully make television commercials, one of the first things you must have is an "off". You must have an ability to connect pictures in a frame.

This particular picture has a fairly straightforward story, so the two-thirds of the picture is in one location: the desert in the gas station. The film had to be opened up, but you can only go so far with extreme of a desert landscape. We had to also create a style that would have a continuing appeal to the eye.

Now, television commercials give you that meaning. Week after week, one is faced with different situations and problems that have to be solved, whether it be for soap powder, pet food or airlines.

We looked at various film styles and one that had always



CRIMINAL MINDS BY MICHAEL

interested me is the camera's being constantly on the move. We say we use zoom lenses, they are only used to break up the moving picture.

Along with that, we have used long lenses to shoot dialogue—and I'm talking lenses that are 138mm to 200mm plus.

There is one particular lens which is a great favourite of mine: the Canon 150-400mm zoom. It's not being used from a telephoto point of view, but as a portrait lens. That is, I think, something rather new for Australian cinema.

Like all telephoto lens, it flattens out everything and throws the backgrounds out of focus. But here is that lens as a zoom, the backgrounds don't break up as much. You get the feeling of being right in there with the subject matter.

You only have to look at a picture like Tomp Scott's *True Romance* (1994). That is the style of filming we have attempted to emulate in our project. We are able to run scenes from top to tail, without a lot of breaking up of the dialogue pieces, which is the more conventional way of covering a scene.

Robertson believes the overall effect will be much more fluid as far as the audience is concerned:

Characters are moving around the stage, in the air, and you get a feeling of flow. It has much more of a theatrical quality for the actors, although it's certainly not doing what you look at it.

Because the camera is not close to the actors physically, it is closer like playing to a distant audience out there.

In fact, when I first saw the film, that was one of the things that I spoke to the actors about. And the question was to explain that was to show them examples of that filmmaking style. All of those without exception have just endorsed it and wanted to know why they haven't been working that way before.

To get my performance, Robertson believes he needs accurate acting.

It's a very simple process you just have to get the best people available for the job at the time. And to do that, you must have the measure of quality acting. I have been fortunate to have worked for many years, both in my commercial career and on my previous films, with a lady called Faye Marrin, Steven Sydney Young again whom I think is exceptional. She has the ability to sort of cut through the shell of the word and get right to the bone of the matter.

On this film, we were looking for something like 10 people in all and I don't think I saw more than 60 people. Every part was short-listed long before we got to the question of seeing actors. We didn't see dozens of people, which is often a problem. People moved in and selected themselves for the film.

From observing some filming on location in Alice Springs, it is clear that Robertson's favoured directing style is particularly relaxed and stressful.

I'm certainly not directing my first film,

so I think that is a combination of my many years of experience and the first-class team that has been assembled around me.

Actually, I think the glamour, the hype and the frantic qualities that our associates with filmmaking are a lot of a myth. One just has to plan properly and create an environment for the actors to work in.

I really feel for the performer and one of the things I've learnt in my short drama career, and it's certainly very short, is that you must look after the actors. They have to feel very relaxed. If there is stress around them, you won't get the result.

I am very impressed by the strong performances I'm getting. Performances that are so important to me. In fact, it's the performances that let down a lot of Australian pictures.

At the same time, one of the things I don't believe I can do it off an actor how to say a line. When I've cast people of this caliber, I expect them to bring a quality to the part, to make the character live. That is one of the most difficult things for an actor, particularly for smaller roles. So I spend a lot of time with them prior to the shoot, talking about characters.

We worked quite heavily on the couple of weeks prior to shooting with a dialogue director/actor coach, and we dissected the story. If character X appears on page 3 of the script, what was he doing prior to that? What is his life? Where did he come from?

We tried to get a critical path working with each of the characters. At one stage, we even divided the story into a diagram so we see the collision courses of certain characters as they meet and then split off again.

It's very important that the actors understand who they are supposed to be. Then I let them bring as much as they can to the role.

Apart from setting up the shot and making sure that we've

ROBERTSON: "I'm very into style. I'd like to think I can carry it into my work, because audiences are so sophisticated from a visual point of view... One of my major criticisms of Australian feature filmmaking is the lack of style."

Blocked through their action from top to tail, the most important thing is to go in and record them off while the scene plays.

The script is not precious so that we make changes even in their last stage. The main thing is to keep the action focused. Every scene has a key moment and it is usually attached to one of the actors. That then becomes that actor's scene and he or she must make sure it's not taken over by something or someone else.

Robertson shoots most scenes all the way through without a break, two or three times from different angles and with different levels of close-up. Almost invariably, the camera is on the move — on a dolly, on hand-held.

We use long lenses even for the action shot, so that you get that feeling of being right in there with people. Then we change the lens for the same dolly track to alter the perspective.

It's crucial to be that, if a scene is running with three different lens, you get three different perspectives. But (these three different perspectives really become an aesthetic progression); it could mean just as 27 times the number of cuts.

Then, if we have the chance and the time, we do what I'd call a window shot. It does not in practice exactly the same move, we might just go for motion and movement. It might be a person's walk, or a person's climbing; then they might be starting on a car number plate and watching a wheel body cross it, which will cut into the action again. But that only happens if the clock is on my side.

Robertson's primary intention has been to make the film visually exciting.

I'm so influenced by certain directors and their cameramen that Don's help has not only that the look and image is greater in my work, and well known so it's something that I've been struggling with for some years.

If you look at my previous two films, my first was very much a beginner's idea. The second, as I said, had an unfortunate marketing path and didn't get the right audience. But it's a heavily stylized film. In fact, *Going South* was the last picture Denis Sander shot in Australia before going to America. He left his mark very heavily on it with the use of lenses.

One of the key elements of that film was that two thirds of it was shot on one lens, a 14mm Panasonicon wide-angle. It was a look that was way ahead of its time. I was very heavily influenced by Terry Gilliam and *Brain* (1985).

I'm very into style. I'd like to think I can carry it into my work, because each scene are so sophisticated from a visual point of view.

One of my major criticisms of Australian feature filmmaking is the lack of style. I think *Intervally* Ballroom (Bar Luberman, 1992) had a wonderful style; it was so fresh and good. I haven't seen it yet, but I understand *The Adventurers of Frenchville, Queen of the Desert* (Stephen Elliott, 1994) has that style.

ROSS MAJOR Production Designer

With the countryside being so powerful, I didn't want to overexpose the sun. I used strong colours, but spent three days in the red and yellow of the earth, and the blue of the sky. We didn't want a clichéd, outback Australian look that stems from a period, the early Victorian look with wrap-around verandahs. I wanted more a 1990s milk bar/cafe look, with dressing from the '60s and '70s.

We wanted something a bit incongruous; it's an old setting with the front-wheeled car. You are in the country. It has to look like it belongs.

This is the third film I have done in the region (The Last Frontier and Quigley), so I've learnt what to expect — like having to put in access roads and preparing the site properly, positioning down the dais, and so on. We pre-built the set in Adelaide and assembled it here. The hardest part is the logistics of it all.

What I'm really doing is setting up a series of staging exercises. That's the way we work in this country. A central props storage facility would be a help, so you don't go and buy a prop for a shoot, then when you've finished you sell it — and six months later you need the same thing again.

THE FINAL SCENE OF *GOING SOUTH* RECREATED



Back of Beyond

Now both of the boys who directed these pictures do not have a long tradition of training in filmmaking, yet they were able to introduce a style which is exciting. Too many of our people with long traditions of filmmaking can't break from a style.

The length of the shoot was two or three days, which is quite short.

Very short! That is another reason I'm using this technique. It gives me coverage, which is very important, and speed of pace counts per day, which is imperative in a production such as this.

The length of shoot is related to the budget. It's a good budget, but it's certainly not an outrageous one.

Coming so far away from the capital costs is expensive. Just the surface equipment for the production shoot is some hundreds of thousands of dollars. But we wanted to get the look, and you have to pay for it!

What is the look for someone like Robertson when he directs films?

Anybody who directs films has to have an eye. People who say they don't aren't being truthful. If you are going to be in this business, you have to know a trumpet of some sort, and preferably it's your own.

I've led a fairly low-key filmmaking existence, despite the achievements. To me the work is everything. I don't subscribe to filmmaking as just art.

Some months ago, I took a personal ad in one of the advertising trade journals and the headline of the ad — it was for a commercial that I'd shot earlier this year — was a quote by Richard Avedon: *rough made after thinking, Shadowneck* [1993]. "Film directing is 99% energy and 1% talent." I've long subscribed to that sort of commercial attitude to the business.

One has to have enormous stamina, and massive equanimity to perseverance to get things through. The fact that I've been out of the business for the period that I have, and out of what I'd call the Cinema Papers filmmaking world, is testimony to the fact that this is what you must have.

I'm drawn to this young fellow, Stephen Elliott. He was a production runner a few years ago, and all kinds of stuff. He took to his gun and he has delivered a picture that people want to look at. Whether it's critically successful or not is irrelevant, he has made a successful commercial picture which is going to help others make their pictures. As long as we are getting a few hits and breaking through, it's going to work for us.

At the same time, Robertson clearly relies on the experience of production designer Ross Major, director of photography Steven Delaney, the actors and so on, as well as his own.

Despite the background that I have, I also have a fairly formal filmmaking background. I was very fortunate to go to film school at the United States in the mid 1970s, where I studied non-fiction

film and looked at the great filmmakers of the century's work. I was under the guidance of some of the best teachers.

Of course filmmaking is art. It's just that I don't believe the sort of films I make are pure art. I certainly couldn't make a *Map of the Human Heart* [Victor Wenz, 1993]. That's a very clever and intelligent film, but I'm interested in films that entertain, and entertain on a broad spectrum.

A LOCATION AND A DESIGN

The principal location for *Back of Beyond* is the petrol station, set at the base of a dramatically-shaped escarpment. Robertson:

I was very fortunate to have on board as production designer, Ross Major. Ross has a lot of experience in what I'd call Australian outback films. He was involved in *Quigley* [Simon Wincer, 1992], which was shot within 10 km of where we are. He did a lot of location scouting for that picture.

When he came on board, we talked about finding a dramatic mountain range in the other end of the country. I said I didn't want the "Broken Hill look"; I wanted something with a little more drama attached to it. Ross and I discussed Alice Springs, and he said he knew a place called the Sphero.

When appeals to me is that it is an Australian location, but it has a different quality to it. It has a lower landscape appearance when you get up high above it. It also has, dare I say, an international flavor. The rocks remind me very strongly of the United States and parts of Monument Valley. It certainly isn't a Monument Valley fringe so films.

What was the brief Robertson gave production designer Ross Major regarding the look of the petrol station?

My brief to Ross was to stay clear of a dwelling that you would find at the Australian outback. I wanted the film to come from nowhere.

We have chosen very heavily of what I expect you would best call a New Mexico door. It has an Art Deco appearance, with the curved wall, portfolio windows that you would expect to find in an old Photo shop. The columns are very Stern Fe, and yet the service area attached to it is a suburban scene, which couldn't be more Australian.

So, it's a building in odds with itself. I didn't want to see film-looked outback shack. I wanted to say, somewhere.

Given Robertson's concerns, one wonders to what degree his response wasn't in part to give the film accessibility for American audiences.

To me, the Australian outback is really not that much different to the American outback. You have Red Indian doors, we have Aborigines here. You have lost souls on roads, and this is a road film.



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Cecil Holmes

1921-94

KEN BERNARD

Unlike others who have written warm tributes to Cecil Holmes – Graham Sharley, Bob Raymond, Jackie McKenna among them – I was never fortunate enough to meet the man. But I felt I knew his story, or at least that part of it which related to his on-screen, off-screen filmmaking exploits in this country.

My impression of Cecil Holmes had always been of a sort of misanthropic Orion Weller someone working almost outside ‘the system’, producing their best work as a (relatively) young age, denied opportunities to turn out another master work, somehow never able to maintain their potential, and leaving us with a clutch of fascinating but incomplete projects. Such an impression doesn’t bear too much scrutiny: nothing Holmes directed is in quite the same league as *Green Kang* (1941) and, despite a somewhat turbulent relationship with the bureaucracy, he still managed to turn out over many years almost thirty sponsored films and television programmes for a range of government departments and private companies, including a impressive body of work for the (then) Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Whether past or present, then, I thought it appropriate to view the ‘film pioneer’ interview with Holmes – conducted by Graham Sharley and produced by the APTS in January 1980 – in order to replace my long-held impression with something more realistic. I was surprised by what I saw. This was an Australian public version of *Kang* trumping the locusts, descending social justice for all, neither a hallelujah of a man, haunted by ghosts of decades past. If anything, the Holmes I thought I detected in this interview seemed almost a shy man, self-deprecating in relation to his own work, reluctant to critique others working at the same field, seemingly no longer bitter about the lack of local distribution and/or earnings of his (only) two narrative features. Only rarely here is there an edge to his comments. Holmes could never forgive, for example, the overseas film-borne exhibition success in Australia for taking so much money out of the country and putting back in little.

So what do we make of this man and his contribution to our film culture? Holmes, of course, was never just a filmmaker, in his autobiographical work, *Our Man's Way* (1986), clearly alludes to. Our looks to both his writing and his films for clues – and finds much to admire in both.

One of my favourite pieces of writing on Australian film is Holmes' "Ultimate Australian Films", first published in *Overland* in April 1957. In selecting documents to illustrate the period 1937-55 for the NGW Press publication, *Cinema in Australia: A*

Discretionary History, edited by Ian Bertrand, it was a unanimous choice by Richard Barden and I to kick off our section. In it, Holmes presents an admirable case for an Australian film industry in terms of overseas trade, local employment opportunities and national pride. The *History* compared up by Holmes, (except at the time, but all but come to pass).

Of his film work, *The Load of Wood*, the counterpart of Holmes' 1957 postmaster feature, *Three or One*, seems for me his *parce de excellence*. Along with *Moby* and *Stepas* (Ron Maughan Williams, 1952) and *The Back of Beyond* (John Hepp, 1954), I consider it one of the three truly memorable works to emerge from a decade when, nationally, little of lasting significance was produced in this country. When asked why he sought

to adapt the Frank Hardy story to film after the charting experience of *Captain Thunderbolt* (1948), Holmes said simply that it was worth "one more try [...] You never give up." It's as well he didn't.

A simple, but atmospheric 'Robin Hood' yarn as a bush setting during the Great Depression, *The Load of Wood* has strong claims to be seen as the definitive, or near definitive, study of Australian bushlife yet filmed. Again, Holmes played down his achievement: *Three or One* was "just a humorous sort of film [...] not a heavy message film at all". Nor did he comment to deny the lack of theatrical opportunities for the film, though its failure to secure a local release must have been emotionally disappointing for the director, the cast, crew and backers at the time.

When asked by Graham Sharley to name the most personally satisfying aspects of his career, Holmes offered, in parsimonious, to the legacy of his work:

You know that you leave behind in negative form or vault somewhere or other some material which may be of actual value to people who come afterwards, whether they use it in making up into their own films or viewing it for reference purposes or something like that [...] In other words, there is a continuity of your work long after you're gone.

Jackie McKenna has spoken of the almost shameful neglect of our older filmmakers and writers: "It's all very well to catalogue them when they are gone, but why do we fail to recognise them while they are still alive?" His point is a valid one that, in the light of Holmes' comment, it would be a pleasant irony if in the very least a new 35mm print of *Three or One* could be struck for local festival touring, or regional exhibition as part of our impending Centenary celebrations. I compare up an allusion –



John Holmes and others collect carbon monoxide (1955). CHARLES HOWELL IS AT RIGHT

Lindsay Anderson

1928-94

"A great spirit gone ..."

BRIAN HEPBURN

Some of the words most often used to apply to British film and those to director Lindsay Anderson, who died suddenly in September 1994, were "unruly", "troussant", "anarchic", "difficult", when not indeed "impossible". Up to a point, they were all true at one time or other. However, they are not the whole truth and I'd like to say a brief word about an impressive body of work – and about a man who was also able to inspire affections and maintain friendships.

Born on 17 April 1923, in Bangalore, India, into an upper-class military family (father was a Scottish major-general), he was educated at Cheltenham College and, after war service, graduated from Oxford. The background was the only conventionally upper-class thing about him. He was already rebellious at Cheltenham (where, ironically, he later filmed his triumphant anti-establishment satire *If...* (1968)) and at Oxford he founded an influential journal of radical film criticism called *Sequence*, whose contributors included Karl Rosin, Gavin Lambert and Penelope Houston, and who all went on to be famous in their various fields. They also persuaded the likes of John Huston, Siryate Ray and Douglas Sirk to write for them.

Sequence lasted for 14 stimulating issues (all collected) some now), achieving a remarkable coherence of vision. Though the journal claimed that it would be happy to receive articles from "anyone, on any aspect of the cinema, written from any point of view" (No. 3, p. 36), Anderson told me they received very few, partly because they never paid anyone and "because we were only interested in publishing what we agreed with". In fact, some of the articles are attributed to fictitious names (e.g., "Albana Marlow", named for the character played by Mary Astor in John Huston's *A Woman of the Pacific*, 1942), in order to make the contributors look more eclectic than was actually the case. As for back in then, he was editing the luxury of "writing exactly what [he] liked", and he went on doing just that for the next forty odd years. This made him a formidable censor – and an unreasonable friend.

Anderson was savage in his attacks on the shoddiness and social unrelevance, as he saw it, of much 1940s and '50s British filmmaking. "I think one of the worst things was the restriction on terms of class" in his opening sentence in my most recent interview with him (July 1994). When he began making films in the mid-'50s, they were documentaries about ordinary lives, of which the most famous are the Oscar-winning short *Thursday's Children* (1953), about deaf children, and *Every Day Except Christmas* (1957), about the life of the old Covent Garden

market. This was sponsored by the Ford Motor Company, whose only request was that he avoid close-ups of the tracks of real cabbies.

Anderson and his friends Rona and Tony Richardson, through Rona's position as programme manager of the National Film Theatre, set up a series of these short films there in 1956, giving to the name of Free Cinema, which was seen and praised by critics as a breath of new life. Free Cinema was never really a "movement" – a fact confirmed by Karl Rona – but a pragmatic attempt to attract the attention they needed. They were all documentaries, but in Lindsay's case there was always a hint of poetic realism, rather than the didactic form of the 1930s documentary movement of John Grierson and his followers. He wanted not merely to inform but also to move and to engage.

Karl Rona had made a great success of his first feature film, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), and was then offered *This Sporting Life* (1963), based on David Storey's novel. Rona, knowing of Anderson's interest in the project, agreed to produce it only if Lindsay were taken on as director. It belongs with that group of realist films beginning with *Rosie at the Top* (1958) and including *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (John Schlesinger, 1960), but it is different in quality from them. It is restless in its surface treatment of the life of an unimpeachable professional footballer (Richard Harris' best performance), but in real power it is an expression of frustrated emotions, in the relationship to movingly played out between Horne and Rachel Roberts. Today, it looks very much like a masterpiece – a Lawrence of Arabia of the inner life, very powerful in its quality of suppressed feeling.

However, it is not our British film (after a fifteen long spell in Poland, *If...*), which was his greatest popular success, a classic call to youthful rebellion which makes it still a cult favourite. He uses the public school as a metaphor for a divided Britain, and, like him, he detested the class system he saw as the source of Britain's social ills. Whenever we talked about British cinema, and we always did when we met over the past decade, he inevitably began by drawing my attention to the continuously debilitating effects of class. "This is a clipped out country, you know Britain", he said often, marveling that I should be happy to visit it, and blaming class for the misadventures of British life and cinema alike. Shortly before his death, he and David Storey had completed a screenplay for *If...* 2, but he said in my last meeting with him that he had no expectations that Paramount, which had commissioned the script, would actually make it.

None of his subsequent films – and there were not many as many as they should have been – was ever such a commercial success, but they are all watchable. There is no junk. If you think of other notable British directors, he had, unlike Maya el Powell, no



Anderson and a friend visited the Museum of Art, 1968

All Men Are Mortals (1957) or *Housewife* (1958) to be ashamed of, or anything as humiliating as David Lean's *Romeo's Daughter* (1970) to make his admirers wince. That's not enough, but what there is in choice – and in their tough-minded way they keep the iconoclastic faith by which he lived.

O Lucky Man! (1973) follows the career of Mick Travis, the young rebel from *It*, played again by Malcolm McDowell, and as an offensive, farcical satire on opportunism and hypocrisy of various kinds. By now, Mick Travis has become a kind of Candide of the business world. *Boy of O Lucky Man!* is obvious, a more downright gaudy compared with the *Swiftness* ferocity of his 1962 film *Britannia Hospital*. In that, the run-down hospital preparing for a royal visit is presented as an analogue of a nation in terminal decline – and its commercial failure had almost the same effect on Anderson's career. It was during his own attempt to promote this film in Australia in 1962 that I first met him, and was at once struck by the vigour and wide-ranging perspective of his approach to questions of British – and wider – cinema.

Two other films stand on one side of these. There is the intensely moving *In Celebration* (1974), a film version of his old friend David Storey's play, for the usually dull *American Film Theatre* series. The film is set almost wholly in the house where three sons go North to visit their ageing parents on their 40th wedding anniversary, but it is not stiff and stumpy and has a beautiful performance as the mother father from Bill Owen, one of Anderson's favourite actors. The other film is the poignantly elegiac *The Whales of August* (1987), made in America, and starring Lillian Gish and Eric Davis, in roles which do honour to two of the greatest actresses of their several film generations. He found an "idiosyncratic" behaviour from Davis, but, in what must sometimes have been a battle of the Titans, happily for the film's sake Anderson seems to have won.

As well, there were numerous influential stage productions, notably at the Royal Court in the 1960s and early '70s (including *The Long and the Short and the Tall*, *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*, and *The Contractor* by his now regular collaborator Storey), along with classic productions at Chichester, the brilliant television music series *Glory, Glory*, starring television evangelists in living performance as well as studio actors in *Cherubs of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981), a touching three-part tribute to his great hero John Ford, and finally, last of all, *Is There All There Is?*, a day-in-the-life of himself, one of a series of such programmed commentaries for British television. To begin with Lindsay in his bath and made with the actor/tinger of the roles of his actor friends,

Bill Bower and Rachel Roberts. The Melbourne and Sydney film festivals ought to stick it out.

It is never all an exercise as imperative as anyone has achieved in British cinema, and I prefer now and then to ask how to write it properly. The outpourings for popular taste, too, are promising for the long-term, he gained a reputation that made it difficult for him to find work as an actor years.

It is nonetheless clear that he also inspired devotion in a great many people. Sir John Gielgud embraced his induction to the modern theatre to Lindsay's director of him in *Housewife*, and, in an interview Lindsay arranged for me with Gielgud, the great actor spoke with warm affection for his unlikely friend. I am sure it was only loyalty to Lindsay that had led him to guard me the interview. Others like actors McDowell, Roberts, Alan Bates, producer-director Jocelyn Herbert, writers David Storey and Storey, and music director Alan Price worked for him again and again, and he had just been to Prague to meet again with the director of photography Miroslav Ondříček, who had shot three of his early films, including *It*.

He had a capacity for keeping friendly during the last ten years, I felt greatly privileged to be one, and he was helpful to me in my work in many ways. He had had several valuable interviews for me and even conducted one for me when the actor in question was out of England during my time there. He could be, and very often was, generous, courteous and stimulating. Transparent, too, of course. "Have you no discrimination of a good kind?", he once asked me as I expressed enthusiasm for some ancient British film anthology. One day when I was at lunch at his house in London, he asked me what I'd thought of Bernard Miles' mildly scandalous film, *Chances of a Lifetime* (1958), which I'd just seen in the Archive. I remarked that it was "not interesting". "Not interesting?" said his son as he said "not interesting", he remarked for the assembled company, no complacency was implied.

I was very fond of him and I shall miss him very much. Going to England won't be the same without his being there to correct my or flow enthusiasm. At the end of this final interview, I asked whether producers thought of him as primarily a stage director who did some film work. A film director with a notable stage record. He said, "I don't think people think of me as all." About that, I think he was absolutely wrong. Producers may have been wary of him, but they could not have been unaware of him.

Miles's more as a far and much-admired version of the actor film appeared in *The Age*.

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a f AUSTRALIAN FILM

the AFC, a federal statutory authority, was formed in 1973. Its key aims are:

- to provide development and post-production funding for film and television projects,
- to promote and facilitate international co-productions,
- to assist in the cultivation of new and critical audiences for film,
- to support the marketing, distribution and exhibition of Australian programmes,
- to provide a central information resource for the film and television industry and resource industry development, and
- to provide advice to the federal government on film matters.

In 1982-83, the AFC's total funds were \$26.5m, comprising \$17.3m in parliamentary appropriations and \$9.2m in revenue. At 30 June 1983, 48 people were full-time members of staff, and 4 part-time. (Rus. *Journal Report* 1982-1983.)

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The AFC is overseen by a Board of Commissioners. The present make-up is: Sir Millican (Chair), Christopher Smeaton (First vice deputy chair), Cathy Robinson (Chair Executive), Graeme Newman, John Smeaton, Laura Jones, Robert Campbell, Les McMillan and Stuart Cunningham.

Internally, the AFC is divided into six key areas:

Executive branch, which oversees Policy. The Chair Executive is Cathy Robinson (see interview starting p. 28).

Marketing, which assists in the international marketing of Australian programmes and programme-makers, with an indirect domestic input. Director, Marking is Sue Murray (p. 60).

Film Development oversees the script development and production funding of features, shorts, documentaries and new media. The Director is Tim Reed (p. 34). New Media is overseen by Project Co-ordinator Michael Hill (see article on New Technologies, which includes comments from Hill, p. 33).

Industry and Cultural Development manages the funding of the cultural infrastructure (and bodies such as Open Channel, the AFI and Cinema Papers), as well as one-off special activity funding. The position of Director is presently vacant, but was previously held by Cathy Robinson, who discusses aspects of its activities in her interview, particularly the recent IED Review.

Indigenous branch concerns itself with Aboriginal and Torres Strait assets in film and television. The recently formed branch is headed by Wai Sanaulani (p. 44).

Finally, there is **Corporate Operations**.

FILM DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION

The AFC supports film development (features, shorts, television, documentary and new media) through the funding of scripts and some aspects of pre-production. It also funds the production of shorts, documentaries and

low-budget features.

Shorts: The AFC is the largest supporter of short films in this country, and its interest and investment in new filmmakers is a crucial catalyst in their getting a career start.

The AFC's success rate in funding short films can be seen by the disproportionately high number of Australian films which win prizes abroad (the world). It is hard to recall a month recently where Australian films didn't score somewhere or other.

A second measure of success is the high number of short filmmakers who have gone on to features.

That some operational filmmakers go no further, or that their films disappear with little more, is hardly surprising on considering, given that the AFC works in the area of greatest risk-taking. It must be prepared to fail if it is going to find the filmmakers who will stand out in the international arena, who have something unique to say and the creative skills to impart it.

Low-budget Features: The AFC is not the sole player or controller of decisions in the area of low-budget features — there is

AFC-FUNDED FEATURES 1976 TO 1982-83

FILM TITLE & DIRECTOR	AFC INVESTMENT in \$1000s	STATUS
<i>Blackkettle</i> (Paul Hartman)	0.72	Released
<i>Body</i> (Malcolm Ross)	1.25	Released
<i>Breathing Under Water</i> (John H. Coxhead)	0.94	Released
<i>Broken Highway</i> (Graham Green)	1.26	Released
<i>Dead in the Water</i> (John Cox)	0.24	Unreleased
<i>Golden Bride</i> (John Cox)	0.4	Released
<i>Great Moments of English</i> (The Green Project)	0.41	Released
<i>Greenknap</i> (Graham Green)	0.84	Released
<i>Holidays on the River</i> (John H. Coxhead)	0.94	Released
<i>Jindilli</i> (John H. Cox)	0.3	Awaiting release
<i>Life of Harry Darr</i> (The Green Project)	1.25	Awaiting release
<i>Reverse Street</i> (Malcolm Ross)	0.15	Released
<i>Proof</i> (John H. Cox)	0.5	Released
<i>Rampage</i> (Graham Green)	1.5	Released
<i>Sea and George's New Life</i> (John H. Cox)	0.72	Released
<i>Seventeenth-Century</i> (John Cox)	0.22	Unreleased
<i>Talk</i> (John H. Cox)	1.01	Awaiting release
<i>Topsy</i> (John H. Cox)	0.4	Released
<i>Victim</i> (John H. Cox)	1.54	Awaiting release
<i>What I Have Written</i> (John H. Cox)	1.5	Pre-production

Also listed as a feature in *The Guinness Club* (p. 249), 1982, but that is usually considered a documentary.

C

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT
COMMISSIONINTRODUCTION BY
SCOTT MURRAY

also the FFC through its occasional Film Funds. Some people question whether one needs both the AFC and FFC operating here, but, given the funding limitations of each, overlap is arguably necessary to ensure sufficient filmmakers are given a chance.

As well, both bodies have different media approaches. The AFC funds only first features (with some exceptions). The Film Funds, while primarily interested in new-screen directors, has funded some experienced filmmakers, such as Gillian Armstrong (*The Last Days of Cleopatra*). It is also able to fund higher-budget films than the AFC, with its limit of around \$1.5m.

At the same time, there is good interchange between the AFC and FFC, as seen with Tracey Moffatt's *McDavid*. That feature was up for consideration by the AFC, but its budget was too high for the AFC to fund. Rather than curtail the film's ambitions, the AFC passed it on to the FFC when approached about possible projects for Trust Fund consideration. Moffatt was then able to make the film on the budget her producers told her needed.

If there has been one area of real controversy, it has been the AFC's decision of "Time out" feature directors. (See interview with Tim Rood.)

Budget Cuts: Another difficult issue is the cost of AFC features, shorts and documentaries. Given the limits on corporate funds, some are arguing that perhaps more films (especially features) could be made on less big budgets to more widely spread out the money. However, there is no point in being democratic to the point where no one has adequate funds to properly realise a project.

As a guide to costs, the table at left shows a list of AFC-funded features taken from the AFC's Annual Reports (from 1993 to 1999-01), with a recent decision added.

New media: The AFC has been pioneering the development of, and an interest in, new technologies. As Philip Dunneke discusses in his piece, these efforts have not always been embraced, given the deep-seated distrust by much of the film and television industry.

The Prime Minister's "Creative Nation" speech showed how important government feels new media is (and the odd cropping in the print media showed how little some mainstream journalism comprehended the issue).

Dunneke's article, in discussing these and other matters, goes far beyond just looking at the AFC (and thus outside most guidelines of what this supplement might cover), but the matters are clearly important and the AFC's role is pivotal.

MARKETING

Marketing is an area that is well understood by all those Australian who have succeeded in foreign film festivals and markets, but less so by those at home. The Marketing branch's brief is to focus on the overseas promotion of Australian film and filmmakers (in the broadest sense), and to assist in the domestic market only in an indirect way (otherwise, the AFC may be seen to be competing against private distributors and exhibitors).

Just as other branches of the AFC have a nurturing role, so does Marketing, with its handling and development of the young and inexperienced in areas such as Cannes. The odd newcomer may still arrive a little timidly, but the Marketing staff of the AFC, and the older and wiser industry veterans, are there to guide.

Most striking is how a great number of Australian producers, distributors, directors, even actors, have learnt to work Cannes (and MIPED, MIPCOM, et al). Contracts are quickly made, projects well pitched, and deals struck with the requisite measure of enthusiasm and hard-headed realism.

INTERNAL ISSUES

Another area of particular concern to those within the AFC is the perceived ethic of hiding the corporate light under a bushel.

In the recent *Cinema Papers* supplements on the state film bodies (Film Queensland, the New South Wales Film & Television Office and Film Victoria, so far), a common thread has been the desire on the part of the majority funding parties to minimise their role in outcomes.

Likewise, the AFC's achievements should be recognised, even if only for the simple reason that they are demonstrable proof of taxpayers' money being effectively spent.

Australia has achieved far more in two decades of film assistance than copying could have suggested, and it represents a certain achievement in cultural terms second to none. But, despite the Prime Minister's "Creative Nation" policy, there are still arguably far too many people, in government and the community, who under-appreciate the striking achievements of the Australian film and television industry.

ICD REVIEW

Another internal AFC issue has been the Industry and Cultural Development (ICD) Review.

According to the AFC, the ICD branch found itself unable to fund new initiatives because most of its annual budget was already locked into the funding of on-going organisations. The Review sought to assess the value of all ICD activities, determine whether some organisations could become less cash dependent, and analyse on what new areas of activity freely as funds might be expended.

Understandably, the ICD Review caused trepidation within some funded organisations, many of which formed an association in an attempt to counter proposed cutbacks.

The year-long Review is now finished, but the gains and losses are hard to ascertain. (See interview with Cathy Robinson.) Some organisations have lost (the Melbourne Film Festival, Open Channel), some have had more, while others await the future.

Robinson says tough decisions may need to be made. Time will show what they will be.

After studying journalism and arts, Cathy Robinson became Co-ordinator of the South Australian Media Resource Centre in Adelaide. In 1986, she joined the Australian Film Commission as Director, Cultural Activities (now Industry & Cultural Development). In this rôle, Robinson had responsibility for managing AFC relationships with the 15 film culture organizations receiving its financial assistance.

After Kim Williams left as Chief Executive of the AFC in 1988, he was followed (rather briefly) by Daniel Rowland. Then, in March 1989, the AFC's Board of Commissioners appointed Robinson as Chief Executive.

Robinson has been an Australian Film Institute Awards judge and a member of the AFI's former National Education Committee, among a wide range of film industry and community involvements in both South Australia and New South Wales.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AND A COMMISSIONER

CATHY ROBINSON

INTERVIEWED
by SCOTT MURRAY

What was your view of the AFC at the time you became Chief Executive, and what have been the major changes over the past five years?

When I took over the AFC, I had a very short-term view, simply because my first job was to find a future for the organisation and to reconstruct it. It was reasonably clear that the kind of place it had been during 10BA was not the kind of organisation it could continue to be in the presence of the Film Finance Corporation (FFC).

What the AFC might do in a positive sense was a much more problematic question. We looked at what the AFC had done, and tried to work out what to keep, what was of real value to the industry – an industry that was in decline, simply because the amount of money available under 10BA was no longer available.

Clearly, Marketing was important, both from the point of view of selling films and the kind of cultural forces that had been emerging from that branch. It was a combination of the business and cultural aspects of the industry, which gave rise to programmes like Cinema Australia.

It was also clear that we needed to combine spending money in the Cultural Development area. So the two big areas which required a lot of thought were Policy and Film Development.

In Film Development, it was obvious that we needed to continue to support scriptwriting. We had the biggest pot of money available around the country, and there was demonstrable evidence that the money for writing scripts was not going to come from anywhere other than a government agency. This

perceived need also had to be measured against what we else we might want to do in Film Development.

We soon decided that it was vitally important to have some professional expertise, including feature films. The AFC, of course, had already been supporting low-budget features, seeking out projects by first-time feature-film directors – our "newbies" class was – that didn't cost a lot of money.

In the face of the FFC's commercial focus, which there was a need for us to do feature film work that was about development and the provision of opportunity. There was a rôle for us as a kind of development agency for the industry, interests of projects and people.

That also gave us an opportunity to be involved at the beginning and at the end of the filmmaking process. We could become a quite important and valuable resource – not only to people in Australia, but also to those people overseas interested in our industry and where it was going. We could develop a perspective on the development of projects and people that was, at one aspect, then at least rare in Australia.

The other questions we faced, especially in the wake of the establishment of the FFC, is what to do with Policy.

If it turned out the FFC was to increase private investment in the film industry, one of the things we could do to help that was the collection, analysis and publication of information. That way, a much more precise picture of the size and performance of the



industry, at home and overseas, could arrange. That would be not only useful for people who were interested in investing in the industry, but also for those working in it. They could get a sense of the shape of the beast and where they might best place themselves.

There was a very strong feeling around at that time, particularly in the AFC, that there was just not enough concrete information and analysis. So, we have concentrated very much over the past four or five years on that which is reflected in our establishing a Research and Information section. We collect information about performance, individual films, cast and crew lists, release dates, and so on. It has become a huge and very valuable resource.

We very carefully managed the introduction of computer systems, so that we had a technological resource which would enable us to quickly and effectively establish these data bases. Indeed, one of the issues that faced us was how to cope with the data bases that were brooding around us like rabbits. We had to develop clear policy about what sort of information we wanted to

collect, who uses it could be put to, and who would have access to any gathering that information.

I guess all that's the long way of saying that the AFC was on the brink of needing to change quite significantly if it was going to remain useful to the industry.

Was this need for change something felt just within the AFC and by yourself, or was it an industry perception as well? Indeed, was government also interested in restructuring its industry support?

It was a combination of all three.

It was reasonably clear that there was a possibility that, if we couldn't come up with some sensible and productive idea for ourselves, then Canberra would look to do something else with us. I'm, of course, much more apprehensive was. In fact, we thought long and hard about whether or not there was a role for the AFC before we made any final judgements.

It was clear from the industry that it was looking for an organisation that was a resource, not only in terms of money but also in terms of intelligence. The question was how could we best combine the two to suit the needs of the industry.

There was a very strong feeling within the AFC, both at senior management and staff level, about the need for change. A lot of people within the AFC felt it had become rudderless. A disappointment was amount of the successful and harness resources of the place had been devoted towards making sure that the FFC was got as right as possible, and a lot of a vacuum resulted. There was a need to think about how to fill that and, indeed, whether to fill it.

Relationship with federal film bodies

Was there any discussion in government about amalgamating the AFC with the FFC, or with any other federal film body?

It's an issue that's been around for a while. There has been a lot of concern off and on in Canberra about the number and efficiency of federal film agencies. If you include the AFC, Film Australia, the Australian Film Television & Radio School, the National Film and Sound Archive, the FFC and the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF), you have six agencies. It's a legitimate question to ask whether or not it's valuable or effective to have all of those agencies operating separately. Can economies of scale be achieved by one management structure for a range of functions, as was the case when the AFC was the only game in town?

"WHEN I TOOK OVER THE AFC, [...] IT WAS REASONABLY CLEAR THAT THE KIND OF PLACE IT HAD BEEN DURING 10BA WAS NOT THE KIND OF ORGANIZATION IT COULD CONTINUE TO BE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE FILM FINANCE CORPORATION."

So, yes, that question was asked. It was asked by us, by people in the industry, and by government. It was also certainly asked by the opposition, at that stage.

We felt quite strongly that there was a synergy between the work that the different branches did which made it sensible for the AFC to carry on as a self-conscious organisation. In fact, when the Special Production Fund was financing projects under 100k, there had been some internal philosophical tension between the demands of the mainstream industry and the work of the Creative Developers Branch, with the script and the piggy in the middle. The Cultural Development area of the organisation, if not physically but at least intellectually, was out to one side.

I believe there was an enormous sigh of relief as the prospect of being able to be involved in development of all aspects of our work. Even though we were determined that Marketing was going to be there to serve the entire industry, there were real benefits in having those resources available to us in the development of people or projects. That combination has been really important in terms of the capacity of the organisation to help launch a number of important directors' careers over the past few years.

The question of amalgamating agencies still arises, not so much about whether things would best in the current arrangements, but from the point of view of, "Gee, is it possible to save any money?"

I think that the film assistance arrangements are actually working as well now as they have ever done. There is a reasonably clear articulation of the responsibilities of the organisations, and the complementarity between them. There is some overlap, and some industry and organisational concern about the extent to which the FFC and the AFC work in the area of low-budget feature filmmaking. There is also perhaps a bit of tension around the question of where training leaves off and the work that we do starts. There is an inevitability about these issues, and maybe it's desirable that there is. Sometimes a few jagged edges are preferable to square boxes.

In a set of circumstances where money is not exactly falling off trees, you do what needs to be done. You try and keep to the central focus of your organisation, but there is a sense in which we are all here to make sure films get made, and sent. So, you do what needs to be done.

How much liaison is there between the six federal film bodies about which areas to operate in? Is that something that is discussed as a group or individually?

It's a discussion that doesn't happen as much as it ought, but it's certainly a discussion that happens.

The AFC and the FFC have regular contact through formal monthly meetings and as project co-ordinators and programme manager level, as well as in the marketing area.

We also have been developing much better connections with the Film School (AFTRS) over the past few years. We've done a few joint projects, and there is a bit more talking between us

about who is doing what and why, a bit more care about not stepping on each other's toes.

I suspect our relationship with Film Australia is not as good as it could be, and, to a certain extent, that has to do with the fact that Film Australia's role in the Commonwealth is rather different to others. It is not a film assistance agency in the same sense as we are, but we do talk, and these conversations are valuable. We talk with the ACTF, as well.

We do meet irregularly as a group, more often than not when issues demand. For example, the recent proposed restructuring of the Department of Communications and the Arts caused some of us some concern, so we got together and prepared a joint response.

One other possible overlap is in publications, because the AFTRS does work in that area as well.

That's true, although we try and keep reasonably clear on that score. We did the Production Manual together, and on other projects we have done work on preparing the manuscript while the Film School has taken on the role of publisher.

There is quite a bit of traffic between Research and In-

formation and Policy at the AFC and the Film School in relation to these sorts of questions. There is a lot less overlap, and a much more useful exchange of information, than there might be. In fact, our Research and Information people are very good at keeping in constant work not only the other federal, but also the state, film agencies.

State bodies

How do you see the AFC's relationship with the various state bodies, regularly or as a group?

The relationship fluctuates. Sometimes it's robust and good, and sometimes it's incredibly unclear. That will happen with each of the agencies. There is no one agency with which we enjoy more, or less, difficult relations than all of the others. It's inevitable that there will be in issues where our perspectives clash, or where we or they don't deliver in a way that is expected, if not anticipated.

In a country which is a federation, the state agencies will inevitably position themselves as representatives of particular points of view at particular times. That will cause tensions with the Commonwealth. And, as a country, we are not very good at organising these tensions, although we have become better at it.

There is a strong argument of room for much more effective collaboration, and for a better understanding of where particular people and organisations are coming from. We need to respect the judgements other organisations make about how they want to spend their money.

Too often, a difference of position or disagreement about a project or a person becomes fraught with anxiety. Different perspectives and different issues will always have the potential to deliver different outcomes. That is not bad thing, because, regard-



less of how clear and objective our guidelines are, a lot of what we do is about opinion. It's usually better for the industry if there is a range of opinions, rather than just one. It would be terrible if the combination of the APC and the state agencies meant that there was effectively a closed funding shop.

There have been some real differences of opinion between the APC and the state bodies in the area of film culture. With the possible exception of Film Victoria, the APC has always had a much stronger commitment to film culture, both in institutional and financial terms. There have been periods where the state agencies haven't pulled their weight, and it's been left to the APC to struggle with the really difficult questions of how to help the development

of that culture. In the same time, we have been roundly criticised by everybody, including the state agencies, for not doing a well enough.

There is an enormous amount of competition between the state agencies themselves, and also between the states and the Commonwealth. At a time where issues of productivity and performance are important to these governments providing financial assistance to these organisations, the competition for profile has intensified. There is a view that the APC has suffered as a result. We have perhaps been too modest about our achievements, as that we have, in standing behind the filmmakers, rather than with them or ahead in front of them, allowed ourselves to lose out in the race for copy about who has done what best.

If there is anything in common among the interviewees Cinema Papers has done recently with the state film body executives, it is the desire to maximise credit for films in which the states were only minority investors. In a way, the state bodies seem to resist being junior financing partners to the APC.

That is one of those things that is not worth worrying about. We are here to help make films happen. We are here to help them reach audiences and help audiences grow. We are here to help critical debate. It's important not to lose sight of that.

However, the question of profile is a difficult and important one, especially given that state agencies are selling a regionally specific product. They are naturally going to want to make as much of their achievements as they can. I don't have any difficulty with that. The only thing I do have some difficulty with is the failure to acknowledge the participation of other parties.

In my view, it doesn't do anybody any good to pretend that one is the only source of finance in a particular endeavour if one is not. I think we'll all be a lot happier if that business about claiming sole responsibility just disappeared, and we were more equitable and collaborative in our acknowledgments about the roles other people have played, not only in funding films but also in working together on events, publicising—the works.

The other issue common to the state corporation interviewees is the great concern about infrastructure, particularly within a state. How much is infrastructure a concern of the APC's?

It is an issue for a number of reasons. One is an issue in which its existence is a mark of the economic health of the industry.

We are a small country, with a small domestic production industry. People need to work in other ways and other places to earn a living. If they are not doing a feature film, there has to be other opportunities to produce their craft or to exchange. Infrastructure which requires constant work in order to turn over the cash flow for the companies that own it is important in that sense.

Infrastructure is also important from the point of view of the capacity to do things in Australia. It would be a sad day, for economic and cultural reasons, if we had no sound stuff offshore. Indeed, that happens now, because we don't have the capacity in

Australia.

There is a sense in which the presence of infrastructure also underpins a notion of creative control. It provides three-party leverage: people to come here and make films. The intermingling between Australians and foreigners on these films can be a good thing, from the point of view of developing skill and technique, experience and flexibility.

The comparative efficiency of the Australian industry makes a source of pride

for a lot of the people involved in it. That is a direct result of the infrastructure.

Ironically, the states will have a perspective about infrastructure which is about attracting business to their state. There will be competitive aspects to that. I don't usually think that it's sensible to assume that you can have sophisticated infrastructure in such size in Australia. Some states simply don't have the economy or the population not to sustain it. If one has a particular aspect of infrastructure that other people don't, then that's terrific. But there is an extent to which the experiences about the kind of industry structure which can be replicated around the country is ultimately detrimental to the entire industry.

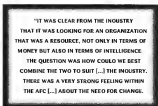
There does seem to be an increasing sense of the states' seeing out their strengths. For example, Film Victoria doesn't wish to pursue offshore production in the way, or to the degree, that Film Queensland does.

I think that is right. And that starting out is something that has happened in the past three or four years. People have made some quite sensible judgments about what they are good at, and what they shouldn't be doing.

The South Australians and the Western Australians have recently been grappling with these kinds of questions, and coming to quite rational views about what they can best do to support their industry.

There is much more effective talk about these issues between the agencies than in the past. That has led to less confusion and especially about what it means to come to Australia, which is a good thing.

The formation of Export Film Services Australia has been a useful exercise in helping some of these issues become clearer, and dealt with more sensibly and effectively.



The rush to claim sole responsibility for success, discussed earlier, seems to be very much a part of Australian culture. It is evidenced by the fact that, in twenty years of publishing film-makers' views in *Cinema Papers*, the number of people who have thanked the APC for its support is probably in single digits. It is very curious, and for all sorts of reasons. One is that the public acknowledgment by recipients of the status of these funds as a real endowment to government that there is value in spending the money, it's a very straightforward issue.

People are getting better at it as repeat times, though, to immediately contradict myself, we are finding people who don't know what it's like to live in Australia without a film industry.

They don't know what it's like to live without an art industry and culture of the kind that has been fostered and supported by organisations like the AFC, the AFC and the Australia Council. In having grown up in an environment where this assistance is available, people take it for granted. It's just not something they feel there is any need to acknowledge.

This is a peculiarly Australian thing. It's not a view that I've encountered in other parts of the world. In the United States and the UK, there is enormous envy about the arrangements here, and bewilderment at Australians who complain about there not being enough resources available to them.

Ironically, governments have become increasingly concerned about the way in which their money is spent, and the outcomes of that commitment. One of the best ways to keep the money coming is pointing to these outcomes and having the producers publicly recognise the sources of finance.

As well, it is dangerous to rely too heavily on success as our means of government of the value of their support. In the 1990s, we have been fortunate to have had at least one major success every year, but we could equally have three years in a row where nothing is particularly commercial. If one privileges box office, one plays a dangerous game.

You do, and that's a real issue for an organisation like the AFC, because a lot of what we do is invisible unless somebody else acknowledges it.

Our marketing work is often invisible in Australia, because we do it internationally. It's really only the people who go overseas who fully appreciate it. Indeed, it is the international community which acknowledges it most.

The concern for us is: How do we tell that work as valuable to government, and indeed to the opposition, when they can't see it, when it's not immediately tangible?

The other area that is troublesome is the cultural. It isn't easy to point to organisations, books or magazines and say to government, "Look, this is our achievement," and have it understood as valuable. It's precisely because of the "success-as-is box office" attitude that we are asked, "Why are you spending money doing that? Why aren't you just making more films?"

It's very hard to have that discussion because it's a big philosophical issue and you don't often get the required time to have that. What you do is develop a kind of shorthand which is about saying, "Well, look at this. These are the achievements." More often than not, the reason box office gets privileged is because it's easier. It's up there and straightforward.

There is also a sense in which the industry itself fails to celebrate things other than box office success and critical acclaim. In that absence, a critic looks like the film is against one just celebrating themselves out of self-interest, when in fact they're not. But for the industry and the culture, we wouldn't be here. There is no job for an advocate.

I've thought for quite some time that we need to find a different and more sophisticated form of debate that not only incorporates the standard box office and trends, but also tries to capture the meaning and the outcome that is part of telling our own stories, dreaming our own dreams. This is the kind of thing that free commercial governments to get involved in supporting a film industry. The combination of the two has the potential to be enormously powerful.

In the 1990s, there seems to have emerged a much greater interest in diversity. In the late 1970s and '80s, many people positioned about "We should be doing this" or "We shouldn't be doing that." Today, people are happily going off in their own directions.

That not only reflects a change in the industry, but perhaps also a change in Australia. As a culture, we are putting more value on the diversity of people, styles and cultures that make up the country. The public rhetoric is not so much about commitment, as it used to be in the past, but rather about seeking to embrace a recognition that there is an inestimable diversity of thought going on here and that we need to value that.

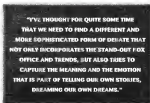
One of the ways you can value it is by ensuring your cultural products come from different kinds of places. I am not only talking about ethnic diversity, I'm talking about ways of thinking, ways of viewing the world.

One certainly no longer hears directors talking about how we must only make films in Australia with Australian for Australians. The phrase "culturally pure" hasn't had much usage in the past five years.

Certainly not to the extent that it was before, though I think the notion would around it is the other way and other voices which have grown louder.

But there hasn't been any criticism, say, of Terence Stamp's being in *Priscilla*, whereas in the '80s it would have created a storm. The debate seems to me to have changed.

Yes. There is also a different kind of intelligence involved in getting Terence Stamp in *Priscilla* than say putting Charlie Schuster in *The Delegates*. We have become clearer about the



way in which we use the Terrace Stumps and the Charlie Scholten of the world.

There is a confidence in the way Terrace Stump was used compared to the complete lack of confidence that saw Charlie Scholten in The Delegates. We were mostly Australians and we needed somebody from another place to lend authority to our stories, to our professions and to our ways of seeing.

Industry and Cultural Development

Cultural Development has been through a Review. What was the process of the Review, and what have been the outcomes?

The Review came about because the cultural area's budget is tooled in. We have a number of organisations and initiatives that we fund on an annual basis, and we had reached the point a little while ago where it was increasingly difficult to fund anything new, be it of a one-shot nature or support of a new organisation. We wanted to look at ways in which it might be possible to release some of those funds.

We didn't get the outcomes from the Review that we sought, although there have been several outcomes, some of which were unintended.

One of the things that we are heading towards is a more sensible arrangement in South Australia. Instead of funding both Co Media and the Media Resource Centre, there will be only one organisation in South Australia, which is more practicable given the size of the place.

We didn't come anywhere close to getting a solution to how to be more effective with our support in Queensland. That remains an outstanding and ongoing issue.

What is that support in Queensland?

It's small and provided primarily to two Brisbane Independent Filmmakers, which is a filmmaker-based organisation, Queensland Cinematheque, and the Brisbane International Film Festi-

val, with a little bit of money to Women in Film and TV and some on a one-off basis to Murray Image, an indigenous film organisation just outside of Brisbane.

The Queenslanders are very much of the opinion that they want more of our money, and they want to spend it as they see fit. We feel the approach in Queensland is fragmented. We have spent time and money on a couple of reports trying to get a more coherent, unified approach to developing a film culture in Queensland, which lags way behind the rest of Australia.

We've been working with Film Queensland on this. There has been good collaboration, and we are probably as one in our view about what the problems are and what we'd like to do to solve them.

The problem for the APC is that we don't have a vast source of new money. We are also wary of throwing money at problems and expecting them to be solved. There is a combination of solutions we need to get to, and I expect that, once there is a new Director of Film Queensland, the whole thing will get back on track.

One of the things we are left with as a result of the Review is that we still have budget lock-in. We don't have a capacity to be flexible, and that hasn't been aided by the fact that we've had to bail Filmquest out recently.

The issue we are faced with now is whether or not we are going to spend more money in the cultural area. In the current circumstances, that means taking it away from one of the other areas.

There are, of course, a whole series of competing priorities for any internal re-allocation, as you might imagine, not the least being the need for the Indigenous Branch to have something of a budget of its own. The question is whether we will seek as much money from government for that area, or whether we have to make some really tough decisions about simply not providing recurrent funds to some organisations to foot a spare money-it's a rock-and-a-hard-place one.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



**AUSTRALIAN
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This is a story you will tell your children and, they in turn, will tell their children and they ... Okay, maybe not. But when the government via its cultural statement pledges \$84 million to multimedia, the subject is worth more than a cursory glance.

MULTIMEDIA AND THE CULTURAL STATEMENT

**OR HOW A BUNCH
OF PROPELLER-HEADS
HAVE FOUND FAME IN CANBERRA**

**REPORT by
PHILIP BUTCHAK**

On 18 October at the National Gallery, Prime Minister P. J. Keating unveiled his long-pending-delayed cultural statement called "Creative Nation". Out of total of \$132 million, multimedia initiatives and programmes are going to make up a third of this package.

In his speech launching the statement, the PM said that there was a need to build "a critical pool of talent with multi-media skills" to go in on creating "a dynamic Australian multimedia industry producing Australian content for Australian and international consumers". Because of these goals, the government is committing itself to a series of five initiatives over a four year period totalling \$84 million.

The "Creative Nation" paper breaks down this figure into five initiatives:

The establishment of a one-off government funded company called Australian Multi-media Enterprise (AME). AME is to manage the funds along the lines of a development capital enterprise and be responsible to the Minister for Communications and the Arts. It will screen and oversee multimedia projects from conception to commercialisation and distribution. It will also seek to engage private-sector investment in projects, particularly those companies who are in the Partnership for Development (PID) programme and encourage international investment. The focus for the AME will be CD-Rom releases and on-line services. The AME is to be given a one-off start-up of \$45 million.

In other words, the AME is like the Australian Film Commission (AFC) of multimedia. It is to recruit the people already networking and positioning themselves for the AME. It is also a possibly hope secret that internally the Department for Industry, Science & Technology (DIST) wanted responsibility for AME and was rather non-pleased when it was given to Communications and the Arts.

The reason for this running around, both outside and inside government, is money. The multimedia industry is expected to mean big dollars — quickly. According to market research obtained by David Court, editor of *Business Entertainment News*, multimedia is expected to grow from \$352.3 billion in 1993 to \$624 billion in 1997. At the recent *Australian Interactive Multimedia Industry Association's* (AIMIA) conference in Sydney, guest speaker Richard Gernert, founder of U.S. computer game company Origin Systems, says he was looking at budgeting around \$US10 million for the film portion alone of a new computer game.

The government is to fund a series of national multimedia forums to be jointly administered by the Department of Industry, Science and Technology and the Department of Communications and the Arts as a means to have an ongoing dialogue between software companies and creative people. Areas of discussion are to include copyright, intellectual property, user face design and development of multimedia titles. Funding is to be \$2.5 million over four years.

Multimedia doesn't finance one new category or government portfolio, or is confined to one industry, just try to get people signing on a definition for the multimedia is to cover the range of the medium. The DST-funded "Commerce in Cyberspace" report quoted two definitions for multimedia: "Digital Media — Creative works which employ computer technology in enable the production, distribution, and sharing of ideas" (David Cox) and "It's the way we deal with information in all its forms: film, television, books, communication" (Russell Wardley). The popular press is on fire at the incorporation of text, sound and images on to a CD-Rom (Compact Disk Read Only Memory). Choose for yourself.

Definitions aside, anything that gets computer people talking with communication people who then talk to creative people, who in turn lawyer, overseas media officials or representatives of, say, the games industry is on the right track. The other point here is that multimedia as the technology of multimedia are creating products and users which are currently outstripping the law and the market — a point that holds true for most countries along with Australia.



CONSUMER CHOICE (NEWCASTLE)
 These three pictures are a composite of a cartoon monkey, a cartoon platypus and a cartoon platypus. The monkey is a cartoon monkey, the platypus is a cartoon platypus, and the cartoon monkey is a cartoon monkey.

The government plans to fund the creation and production of 10 CDs-Rom in les "which focus on national and cultural institutions with an emphasis on the development of collaborative projects". The government has set that up as a two year programme with spending pegged at \$3.68 million for 1994-95 and another \$3.68 million in 1995-96.

Under the title "New Media Program", the government is to help traditional content providers move into the new technology. \$3.25 million is to be given directly to the APC for creating its multimedia titles over four years. This money makes to extend the APC's New Image Research Program and encourage private sector investment. The Australian Film Television & Radio School is to receive \$910,000 and the Australian Children's Television Foundation will receive \$700,000, both over a four year period.

Michael Hill, Project Co-ordinator Film Development at the APC and National Co-ordinator for New Image Research (NIR), says the NIR programme is for "film applicants to the APC who are proposing a project which is experimental or critical in attitude to the formation of images".

Multimedia projects have been funded through the Film Development fund because the \$20,000 ceiling for the NIR programme is too low. APC multimedia projects include Bill Scarsen's *The Exquisite Mechanism of Shivers* and *Promoters of Orpheus* by Jill Scott. A project in development is Chris Coates'

Kanashadow, which will be delivered to people dialling into the internet using modems.

Even though the APC has been funding multimedia projects for three years, the APC received just 30 applications last year. Hill is unsure why that was. "I'm certainly spending enormous amounts of money on the APC and doing so in areas and projects both positive and surprising." A related concern by the APC has been the release of the "International guide for electronic media art distribution" by Peter Collins. Also, in February 1995, the APC will hold its second Multimedias and Filmworks Conference in Melbourne.

Carly Robinson, chief executive of the APC, says that the New Image Research fund is under review as is the whole of the APC's approach to multimedia in light of the government's cultural statement. "We've commissioned Fred Harder and Dominic Case to do research for us in trying to get a handle on the use and work in multimedia, what facilities are available." Robinson says that the APC wants to have its multimedia review finished by November and it remains whether the APC will be receiving any of the New Media Program funds this year.

To the APC's and Film Australia's involvement with multimedia has failed to move the film industry towards multimedia. It is generally acknowledged that the film industry has not had a big part in the multimedia drive. "They don't have a clue" is the way an observer described the situation. That is a little surprising

considering that both multimedia and film share the need for scripts, storyboards, producers, technicians, video and film assets or their representatives from various film bodies have been involved in a number of studies and seminars on multimedia.

The last multimedia programme announced was for the government with public and private organisations to set up six Co-operative Multimedia Centres to promote education and training, provide services and develop multimedia links for local and export markets. Funding is to amount to a total of \$36.5 million for nine years with the programme administered by the Department of Employment, Education and Training.

Education and training in multimedia is high on everyone's list of Australians as to be played in this industry. Educators and educational institutions have been very much into multimedia, not only as a new medium but as a exciting educational tool. Their work, support, papers and network have been and are important for the development of multimedia both in Australia and as an export commodity.

This extends to the matter of on-line services which is seen as critical in Australia being able to distribute multimedia risks worldwide. A link-based study called "Network Nations" by the Australian Science and Technology Council (ASTEC) has recommended to the government that it:

...ensure the establishment of a not-for-profit consortium, involving government, telecommunications carriers, industry and the research and higher education communities to provide a national information network for the research and higher education communities and the wider community.

Professor Ann Henderson Sellers, who chaired the working party on research data networks for the ASTEC paper "The Networked Nations", states that "connectivity is not only for academics and students doing research but it means access to users, all users in the community". At present, it is the Australian Academic and Research Network (AARN) work on connection to 450 organisations across the country and its link into the Internet which is acting as the de facto "information highway".

Nigel Calcutt, a multimedia property lawyer for Correll & O'Dea Solicitors, finds the planned co-operative multimedia centres the more appealing of all the government's initiatives:

I have a fear that generally government reports and programs, no matter how well-meaning, don't make it through to the grassroots, and academics in about young multimedia development working as garages. If the government's program are not fit or hampered there could be a problem in the government tapping into these people.

Chris Vowles, director nationwide multimedia services for Telstra, and that through alliances and "win-win agreements" Telstra wanted "to develop a significant stake in the multimedia content and service provision business" and that Telstra wanted "to play a key part in fostering an expanding range of local and international content and service providers to successfully market their products to these same consumers".

Vowles also called for establishment of a multimedia development centre:

There may be need for more than one. But we see no argument for a facility where ideas and content are developed, using state of the art software tools, into appropriate interactive formats. It would be a laboratory environment.

It is suggested that RMIT in Melbourne is a prime candidate for the government's Victorian multimedia centre.

Apart from these five specific initiatives, the "Creative Nation" statement also asked the matter of copyright by citing the work of the government's Copyright Convergence Group to address copyright in converging technologies, the importance of copyright collecting agencies by proposing to establish a collecting society for the visual arts with financial support; and the need of moral copyright for audiovisual works.

It was the big announcement that had been rumoured about for some weeks, but it clearly caught a large part of the Australian media as they sought to play catch-up in trying to explain to their audiences where that message and program may had come from.

In fact, the government has been working towards that statement for well over a year and a half. There have been a multitude of reports, studies, discussion and action papers all commissioned by various federal government departments in a lead-up to Creative Nation. The list reads like a who's who in high technology subjects. It also shows that government was well prepared in making the statement and it was not, the Murdoch film studio announcement made, captured together at the last minute.

The Department of Justice has sponsored the Copyright Convergence Group, Moral Rights in Copyright issues paper and the Copyright Collecting Agencies study. All of these have been aimed at trying to sort out the complexity of copyright law in regards of how to keep track of your words, images and sounds as the fields of computers, broadcasting and telecommunications converge in the global information age.

The Department of Industry, Science and Technology (DST) has also had a major claim on promoting multimedia. DST set up its *Audiovisual Task Force* in September 1993 "to strengthen the audiovisual industries and increase their involvement with Asia". The Task Force produced a discussion paper called "Media Development in Asia" in March 1994 which had them to increasingly focus on multimedia. In September 1994, they released their "Commerce in Content" report on "building Australia's international future in interactive multimedia markets". The report has quickly gained wide currency in government circles and is now considered as the blueprint for Australia's multimedia drive.

Assistant Secretary for the Audiovisual Task Force Graham Taylor says,

The major concern is in Australia becoming a significant origin and global source for content production. To advance this our department will be working closely with the Department of Communications and the Arts and the Department of Employment, Education and Training as whole, repeat whole, of a government agenda to develop multimedia industries.

The Task Force has also provided the funds for the appointment of a full-time associate to the Australian Interactive Multimedia Industry Association (AIMIA).

AIMIA held an annual conference 22-23 September in Sydney. Opening the conference, the Minister for DST, Senator Peter Cook, said that multimedia had the potential to create a "domestic interactive multimedia market worth \$2 to \$3 billion by the end of the decade". He then pledged government money to fund a CD-Rom trial promoting Australian multimedia companies overseas through an understanding investment patterns of major multimedia into multimedia, and providing through Australia Australia companies an exhibition stand at the next international multimedia MIMA trade fair in France.

In another keynote address, Brian Johns, chairman Australian Broadcasting Authority and head of the broadband services

expert group, emphasised the importance of content both in multimedia and for Australian culture. Later speakers would re-define that as "providing quality content or programmes simply content for content's sake". International speakers included vice president and general manager of Apple Computer New Media Division Satya Chakr, De Michael Allen president of Allen Interactions and founder of Authorware, and Richard Garriott co-founder of Origin Systems.

Executive officer for AIMA Stephen Schwabger described the conference as a "watershed" and estimated that 360 people had attended.

"We took a long time in choosing the conference speakers, both from Australia and overseas, as trying to cover areas of copyright, industry developments in hardware and software, the games industry, education, advertising and telecommunications."

It is a round-table discussion on the final day of the conference, speakers saw the most important issue facing multimedia as partnerships, having a vision, using the pool of Australian talent, the need to get together with multinational, the diverse world-wide demand for multimedia, the importance of networking, and the need for quality products.

However, the biggest player in all this is the Minister responsible for Communications and the Arts, Michael Lee. To end as a future Prime Minister, it was Lee who took the podium, almost as the water-up act before the Prime Minister gave the Creative Nation announcement. Lee's Department presently has any number of projects under way on broadband networking and new technologies. Lee's high profile after the announcement underscores his Department's growing responsibility for a number of the government's new multimedia programmes. In the lead-up to the "Creative Nation" launch, his own appointed Broadband Ser-

vice Expert Group was very public in declaring the importance of "content" – be it film, television or multimedia – over technology for the information superhighways.

The computer games industry, while not specifically addressed, has been consulted widely by the government in its multimedia drive. David Cox, from Australia's biggest computer game publisher Beam Software in Melbourne, is very high on the "Creative Nation" paper. Cox, who comes from a film background and whose credits include the award-winning film *Papenfist*, plus writing on multimedia for *The Age*, also scored a number of awards.

You have the help location with the partnerships but it is the under life with the movements in multimedia, so it is going to be interesting to see if the governments can get it together on multimedia. The multimedia is so new. In terms of making a multimedia sale, we are still figuring out what the equivalent of the multimedia close-up or long shot is.

Not only is multimedia new but there is a general agreement for the need for better also Pacific Advanced Media Studies (PAMS), which specialises in interactive music CDs, circulated the paper, "Core Characteristics of a Viable Multimedia Industry", at issue of this year "to provide a multimedia forum to bring multimedia products and ideas together". In it PAMS stated:

Australia has a once off window of opportunity in the next twelve months to foster the creation of a viable digital media industry which should then remain viable for the next twenty years. Should it not take that opportunity then it will be effectively locked out of this industry and will be relegated again to a purely hi-tech niche as it is in PC software.

Obviously, the government has agreed.

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Tim Read spent a total of seven years at Film Australia, both as a producer and its head of production, working with a "terrifically talented team of producers, writers and directors". He left in 1981 to set up a boutique "or suitcase" production company called Polygon Pictures with Adrienne Read, and had a "successful to moderately successful 1980s". He worked with John Edwards on *The Empty Beach* (Chris Thomson, 1985), *I Own the Racecourse* (Stephen Ramsey, 1985) and *Cyclone Tracy* (mini-series), as well as making a number of documentaries. Read spent 1991 and '92 at the Australian Film Television & Radio School (AFTRS), before leaving to work as a consultant for a year. He joined the Australian Film Commission as a project co-ordinator in late February 1994.

DIRECTOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

TIM READ

INTERVIEWED
by SCOTT MURRAY

READ: At the time I joined the Film Commission, I had no idea that Lynn Cooley, whose work I much admired, would leave as Director, Film Development at the end of June 1994. I applied for her job, and was fortunate enough to get it.

If I have a creative contribution to make to the industry, I believe it's probably best made through other people's careers, in assisting them. I'm the sort of person who likes working in teams, and for staffing organisations such as the AFC and Film Australia.

The trick is to surround yourself with highly-intelligent people, try your hardest to recognise talent when it comes along, and then let it have its head, which is exactly what we enjoy doing here.

Did you have any opinions about the AFC's production and development activities before you joined it?

I've always had a very clear idea of the AFC's role, particularly the Film Development branch's. I was around at the time the AFC was formed, and I was at Film Australia when it was incorporated into the AFC. And, on leaving Film Australia, I was quite often a successful applicant for funding from the branch.

So, I was familiar with the cultural and development purposes of the organisation. I didn't know all the particulars of what it was doing, but I could track, in a general sense, the way the branch had changed as different financing mechanisms moved across the film and television production landscape. I think I know where we sit at the moment.

How would you define that?

As being at the front end – the pathfinding end – of the process.

The success of the Film Finance Corporation has many ways made the role of the Film Development branch a lot clearer, and

in some ways a lot easier. It gives us the capacity to get on with our core business, which is the discovery of a diversity of new filmmakers, stories, practices and contexts.

Let me say, we are not only interested in new filmmakers for the sake of being new, but experienced filmmakers who want to take risks with subject matter they may not have previously dealt with in their careers.

More so than ever, we should be very, very responsive to any idea which is creatively exciting, and to any filmmaker who has a clear view of why that will be exciting to an audience. I wouldn't use the word "marketing" about things we're interested in, I'd rather say "films will create new audiences, or find them, by the strength of their ideas".

How do you see what you are doing in feature production as compared to the FCC's activities via its normal production financing and its occasional Film Funds?

I'm absolutely quite glad the FCC is doing it, if it can effectively use a variation of its Film Fund mechanism again. More does than one are always good, especially as the Film Commission's capacity to do low-budget films is constrained by budget. There are good ideas out there, and they can't all come to the AFC. If there is a home for them at the FCC with its slightly different criteria, and the new Fund is complementary to what we do, then so much the better.

Of course, the AFC will still be the natural home for feature filmmakers who realise we have a special capacity to recognise risk, original conviction and strong vision. Our challenge is to find ways of giving expression to more of that than we have been



"IF I HAVE A CREATIVE CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE TO THE INDUSTRY, I BELIEVE IT'S PROBABLY BEST MADE THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE'S CAREERS. IN ASSISTING THEM. I'M THE SORT OF PERSON WHO LIKES WORKING IN TEAMS, AND FOR ENABLING ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE AFC AND FILM AUSTRALIA."

able to in the past. We are budget-locked presently at two, or possibly three, low budget features a year.

What we are presently discussing in the branch is whether we should invite filmmakers to consider a sliding scale of budget down to \$700,000. Why focus every thing at \$1.5m or \$1.4m, as we have been? What might

be happening in that \$1.5m slot are trying to be crammed into \$1.5m capex. Maybe the Film Development branch should consider different levels of budget, gauges and technologies. We need to encourage different filmmakers into the Commission.

With [AFC project co-ordinators] Claire Dobben, Nicole Skiba and Karim Alkarmi, I recently met a group of filmmakers in Melbourne who were very, very interested in the sub-\$1m area. But they were behaving under the notion that the Commission wouldn't be interested in that. We are interested, and we are discussing it at the moment.

In fact, the AFC's ability to fund low budget film circumscribed by demands of the Media Alliance and other interested bodies. For example, the AFC prepared to fund non-season films?

The AFC might be prepared to fund a non-season film, but only under very special circumstances and only after extensive consultation with the three main associations and the Alliance.

I'm very optimistic that SFAA, ASDA, the Writers' Guild and the Alliance understand the Commission's very special role in the industry. As long as they are brought into consultations, there is always a way of finding a meeting point. But I wouldn't do it without consultation. That would be bad management and very counter productive.

I also suspect the issue of minimum rates might not be the only question to be answered. For example, there has been a dramatic rise over the past couple of years for the short films we fund in cost between \$150,000 and \$190,000. They are good ideas rushing a round with lots of production-value technology on their backs. Let's give that a shake, and see whether the filmmaking community would actually prefer to get their ideas out in a way that didn't recently cost \$150,000.

Isn't the APTBS in part responsible for that mentality?

I want to squelch that question, Scott – and you can prove that. We live in a complementary agency situation, and I'm damned if I'm going to make statements on other people's policy and practice. We are frankly too busy here trying to get our own house in order. I'll discuss that one with John O'Hara and Paul Thompson [of the APTBS].

At the same time, last year we were by far the majority funder of *Only the Brave* [Ann Kookbin], which had a budget of about \$300,000. It's had terrific success and we are all very pleased by that. But we could be seen to mean people the chance to fund a 30 minute or more if we had not spent between \$300,000 and \$400,000 in one year on 50-60 minute films – if we looked at lower budgets.

If you bundle all the drama money up, we have somewhere between \$3.5 and \$4m to spend. What would happen if we decided to govern filmmaking teams – writers, producers, directors, actors – \$1m of that money, and said the challenge is come up with scripts which are dialogue and performance intensive? We could then try and get an accord with a broadcaster. That way, we could give ten teams a go instead of picking out one or two. Ideas for discussion.

Same with feature. \$1m buys only two at \$1.5m. It can buy rather more with lower budgets. Questions for discussion. What does the filmmaking community want?

If you go back to the mid-1970s, when short films flourished, a typical budget for a 15 minute was \$300, while a 30 minute cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000. The increase in budgets since has massively outstripped inflation. There is a completely different approach to short film today.

Yes, it's almost as if short filmmaking has become a professional practice in its own right.

Short filmmaking is a vital part of the spectrum of filmmaking,

let's be clear about that, but it's not in a professional career province, it has very often been used to break new ground or to introduce new careers, and the 1970s model that's out of kilter, about in a very real way, is what we should be discussing: the idea of reducing the budgets.

We did an exercise here the other day on a film that we'd funded. We spent quickly knocked \$40,000 out of it. But a world requires a different kind of focus. Filmmakers to accept that. I'm not suggesting that the mind set on a short, a just needs to be restructured.

I and (producer co-ordinators) Senga Armstrong, and Philippe Babin went to an ASCAA meeting recently in Sydney, and it was quite clear that people felt the Commission was only ever needed fully funding documentaries with cinema production values. Suddenly, they were all seeing \$100,000 to \$150,000.

What concerns me is the notion that we are only interested in one category of anything. In fact, \$100,000 or \$400,000 per doc, cinema that we can only support two or three a year. What about an idea from a filmmaker for a long-format documentary that requires \$40,000 for four years? Let's discuss that.

It was to build two universities, high-budget projects, you reduce your capacity to be innovative, to allow for different filmmakers to experiment in the ways that they want. We must live up to our rhetoric of innovation and diversity.

Organisations don't deliberately seek short-term, but they all need to conserve the ways in which they do things on a regular basis. I'm sure that happened when Lynn Gailer was here: none of our ideas. The fact that a French filmmaker has just been completed leads a good philosophical backdrop to what is now being discussed in the future.

Given that "rhetorical innovation", is there a place for people who want to be mainstream, commercial filmmakers within the AFCP? Absolutely, in the development programme. We are not clear about genre or middle-of-the-road films or commercial films - not clear in the slightest. We only add one person who is a lot of those projects and have to make decisions about which we think are the best.

We would also hope those filmmakers who want to be in the comfort of the middle of the road, doing things that will please a lot of people can have a commission or a release, use the Commission's role as adding value to what they do.

As a result of that, you have the competitive situation - which is not one of our making, but reflects the number of applications we receive. Last year, we handled 758 applications of all kinds. This year, the rate is coming at 938. Of last year's 758 applications, 133 were for development and we funded 143 in that, 126 were production applications and we funded 49. The in a stage of what we decide to fund a ratio between 21% and 27%.

What percentage of films funded in development end up in production?

We haven't done that exercise, though I'm thinking about it very carefully, and so as Cathy. We spend a lot of money on script development, and there is a need for "performance indicators", if I can use that jargon.

At the same time, we have national responsibilities and are mandated to take greater risks with new talent than anybody else. We willingly work into long-term funding relationships on a more risky basis than perhaps our colleague organisations do.

Consequently, if we did an oversimplified strike rate, one might end up with a statistic which doesn't relate to our corporate objectives. It could also be easily misinterpreted by anyone who wanted to misinterpret it. It is much better to agree with the

federal government and the filmmaking community about what sort of performance indicators are relevant to that organisation, and then submit to that scrutiny.

I know Film Victoria was interested in having a comparative strike rate across the agencies. I recommended to Cathy Robinson that we possibly not go into it, because the objectives of that organisation don't correspond to those of any other.

A significant amount of what the AFC and the state bodies

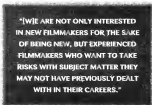
do is simply not quantifiable. How can one meaningfully assess the importance of a Jane Campion through a statistical analysis of her films, an only mildly-raising and -applied indicators, and a first feature that has still not broken even? Statistics, when used to assess culture, can be quite misleading.

Yes, they can be damaging, which is not to decide the veracity of an area that's assessed on strike rates. But they are meaningless when associated with performance measures which have been set in relation to the objectives of the organisation and agreed to by, in this case, the filmmaking community.

The filmmaking community, that the Film Commission answers to, in my view, does not expect us only to make development choices on the basis of whether or not, in every single case, we think the project will go into production. We happen to believe the filmmaking community is where the genius and the wisdom lie. We are not a studio. We have to make subjective decisions in the end, and we better do them as well as we can, but we must not let our lives come only together. We are here to give, within reason, as many people as possible the opportunity to get their voice heard and, if necessary, their projects funded in different parts of the marketplace.

We spend a lot of money, and it can be very important for us to stop spending as much as we do in some areas so that we can spend more in other. This year, for example, we will spend about \$150,000 on feature script development. What I and the branch have to ask is, "Are the studios matching up to expectations, or should we shift some of that money into new media, for instance?"

This Commission is very interested in that bundle of things which is currently called new technology, multimedia and new media. We have a terrific history of funding new-media projects. In Cary



"[WE ARE NOT ONLY INTERESTED IN NEW FILMMAKERS FOR THE SAKE OF BEING NEW, BUT EXPERIENCED FILMMAKERS WHO WANT TO TAKE RISKS WITH SUBJECT MATTER THEY MAY NOT HAVE PREVIOUSLY DEALT WITH IN THEIR CAREERS.]"

Warner, who was here, and Michael Hill, who wasn't, we have had people who really understand the whole area, who are interested in investing in the development of content and intellectual capital.

The Filmmaker and Media Media Conference that we held last year was a great success, and the one that we are holding in early 1995 is, I'm sure, going to set the debating agenda as well. It will be about content and narrative issues, including how multimedia interrupts and versus resources.

Money isn't easy to come by from government at any time, but I'm sure we'll be wanting to make a bid for a bit of new money for what is obviously a new situation in the media.

When you talk about industry expectations, how do you assess that?

The primary way is by meeting with groups of filmmakers, both severally and individually. The project co-ordinators are always having individual meetings, and there are group meetings of the sort I attended in Melbourne with low-budget producers. I consistently meet with the executive officers of ASDA, the Writers' Guild and SPAA, though I have to pick my game up a bit with SPAA.

I also actively use Enact and APC News as a vehicle for discussion. It's not a clear-cut part to be publicly bound, it's much more to do with trying to get ideas out. We are very much concerned to have a debate and to listen.

Presumably the project co-ordinators feed back considerable information, as well.

Yes. Project co-ordinators, as far as I am concerned, are the front line of this branch's activities. It's their judgements and their perceptions, and the way they mix with the filmmaking and multimedia communities, which is the most important thing.

This branch, and the whole Commission, belongs to the community of filmmakers in the broadest sense, not the other way around. It is important to have as many project co-ordinators as possible to get that community going.

I have absolutely no doubt about the film and multimedia literacy of the project co-ordinators, and their responsiveness to the people they talk with. They are very much among the agenda of discussion in the branch, and it's terrific.

The problem we have to solve is the sheer overload of work. With the APC SBS comedy initiative, for example, we had approximately 700 different applications. We are also running the Diversity Australian initiative. The first of those, the Producer Fellowship, closes in a week's time. I'm sure the applications will run into the hundreds.

I'm not crying just, but there is all coming out of the workload of a very hard-working branch. It's not just the project co-ordinators, it's the hub of support around them. We have to find ways of making ourselves more efficient, spending less time on the things which are clearly undesirable and more time on the quality issues, ideas and filmmakers.

How many project co-ordinators do you have?

Five at the moment: Claire Dobbin and Carol Sidan in Melbourne, Sorel Armstrong, Michael Hill and Philippe Barzman in Sydney. We have also had Karin Altman in Melbourne, on a less-than-full work basis. As well, Cathy has just approved the appointment of Jane Oehr as a sixth project co-ordinator.

We now have in the Film Development branch a very flat management structure. The position which was formerly held by Victoria Treble, which used to advise the Director of the branch on decisions and participate in them, has been traded off for that sixth project co-ordinator.

All the project co-ordinators report directly to me. There is nothing between them and me. We work as a collegiate team and reach our decisions as much as possible by that process.

It's a very interesting time for the Commission at the moment. We've just been through a Search Conference and the whole organisation took that chance to examine its preferred future. And later this year, or in early 1995, we will disseminate some new guidelines. I think it's useful to overview yourself every so often, to keep yourself relevant and in tune with what your filmmakers need and want.

Assessment procedures have changed many times over the years. What are they now and how might they be heading in the future?

At the moment, an application for any form of development or production funding is received by one of the six production co-ordinators. That co-ordinator looks at the proposal, comes to a view about whether or not the proposal would be a reasonable use of giving the proposal a sympathetic hearing. Of course, that assessor might end up saying, having understood what the project is about, that it is "not quite ready", or whatever phrase might be used.

The external-assessment procedure is designed to bring a degree of peer-group perspective into the process. A project co-ordinator will take on that opinion, but the assessor will not make up the Commission's mind on it. It will merely inform the Commission.

The project co-ordinator has a number of options at this stage. If the project has reached a certain stage of development, say second draft or post production funding, then as 50 percent of 100 there will be consultation with the Marketing branch. This consultation is really valued by this branch, really valued.

A project co-ordinator has the capacity to spend \$100,000 over all but on his/her own, and can do so in increments of up to \$20,000 per project. On the other hand, the project co-ordinator can come to me and say, "Here is a recommendation for funding. What do you think?" I will have a look at the project, talk to the project co-ordinator, and try to ensure the due process has been given the go.

I read a goodly percentage of all the recommendations that come to me. In the great majority of the cases, the project co-ordinator's recommendation is agreed to by me. That's a very important reflection of the fact that the project co-ordinator's conversations, matched with those of the filmmaker's, are the main inputs into our funding decisions.

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

Marketing is the 'hidden' branch of the Australian Film Commission, its internationally-orientated activities best known by those Australians who have seen its branch staff in action at one of many festivals or trade promotions around the world.

The Director, Marketing is Sue Murray, who joined the AFC in 1981 from the Australian Film Institute, where she ran its Film Awards, among other duties. For a time, Murray was based in London, running the Marketing branch's office there and helping familiarize Australian filmmakers with the intricacies of European sales and financing.

Now based in Sydney, Murray continues her task of assisting filmmakers (of all kinds) get their works and talents recognized and supported around the world.

DIRECTOR, MARKETING SUE MURRAY

INTERVIEWED
by ANDREW L. URBAN

What are the primary goals of the Marketing branch?

We are concerned in getting international exposure for the widest range of Australian programmes, promoting Australian talent and services, and supporting filmmakers to finance and market their work. We have a strong cultural objective and, at the same time, seek to increase the marketing expertise within the filmmaking community.

The resources that Marketing has—about \$1.5m—are by and large devoted to activities outside of Australia. About \$238,000 is spent on marketing loans and travel grants for directors and actors to attend festivals, \$400,000 on market promotion, including Cannes, while the rest is allocated to festivals, special events, research and promotional materials. A good bulk of the money that goes towards festivals is used to support films that are actually selected for the top of the major competitive festivals.

What costs does this expenditure cover?

In the festivals area, basically we meet the costs of sending off material for preview to some of the festivals. We buy prizes so they can be used in focus on Australian cinema around the world. And we cover the cost of professional materials.

For short film changes selected at a prestigious festival, there is actually no way it is going to recoup the cost of the submitted print and publicity material. The AFC will pay the costs in some cases for these films. In a lot of circumstances, the quality of the festival, what reward or return can be achieved for the filmmaker and the film, and so on.

Does the budget of \$1.5m include Marketing branch staff costs?

No, it's just external costs. It's the money we spend on behalf of the industry.

It doesn't seem a large amount of money with which to provide global marketing support for what is a budding industry.

Well, it certainly isn't in the context of what is spent by the French or the Canadians or even, in a per capita sense, by the New

Zelanders. But it's the money that we have available within the allocation of resources.

We work from the point of view of determining what we will do against a set of quite extensive objectives, depending on how much money we have available at any one time, and what the priorities might be.

Obviously, if we had more money, we could do more special events. We could move into exploring not only new countries, but new markets, such as the market for new technology.

Some of our international special events, for example, have been priorities because they coincide with the federal government's international trade promotions. We have participated in promotions in South Korea and in Indonesia. Next year, we shall do a touring season in Germany. We recognise that the film component of these promotional events is very important, and we are doing our best to complement other government initiatives. However, as we don't receive any additional support for promoting events that fit the federal agenda, it does put a squeeze on our resources.

Is it possible to look at this expenditure as an investment and see areas where that has already provided a tangible return?

We would love to have a real sense of what the financial spin-off might be, but it's incredibly difficult. As an example, take the Back of Beyond programme that we did in 1988 with UCLA in California. That was a programme which attracted Australian scientists and films. From our point of view, the attendance at the screenings and the debate generated in the press was terrific. But how much that ever drew attention to the people who work at Kennedy Miller, the documentary filmmakers, indigenous programmes, our feature film directors and so on is hard to tell. There are many people since 1988 who are working in Hollywood, many whose reputations have become much more internationally and domestically known. But it is very hard to say, "We spent this and we got that dollar return."



You are currently working on a project in Asia, targeting a substantial market for some basic awareness lifting.

If one looks at what attaches there may lie to the greater distribution of Australian programmes in countries in the Asia Pacific region, including countries like India, what one needs to come across is the fact that distributors are nervous about acquiring the programmes.

The actors, the filmmakers and Australian cinema as such do not have a very high profile. They are risky programmes for them to purchase and to promote.

In looking at that, one says, "Okay, what can we do on behalf of the industry which starts to address that issue?" We went back that if we can create a greater awareness among the consumers, it will encourage distributors to take a bigger chance. And the way to get to the consumer is through the mass media, television, profiles in magazines that draw a young and diverse and interested audience, film festivals which give people access to our programmes, and so on.

In Seoul, for example, we negotiated a supplement to *Asiadivine*, the film, television, video and rock music magazine in South Korea. That supplement covered a whole range of programmes from Australia, and the media suggested a subject for very small expenditure on our part.

"WE ARE INTERESTED IN GETTING INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE FOR THE WIDEST RANGE OF AUSTRALIAN PROGRAMMES, PROMOTING AUSTRALIAN TALENT AND SERVICES, AND SUPPORTING FILMMAKERS TO FINANCE AND MARKET THEIR WORK. WE HAVE A STRONG CULTURAL OBJECTIVE AND, AT THE SAME TIME, SEEK TO INCREASE THE MARKETING EXPERTISE WITHIN THE FILMMAKING COMMUNITY."

Was that tied to an Australian reason?

Yes. We were able to negotiate the sale of four feature films to SBS Television, which were programmed as an Australian season in prime time on four consecutive Sunday nights. They actually bought six films, but four of them made the programme.

Was that a package negotiated by the AFC or did the sales happen and then the AFC came in?

No, we went to see a range of broadcasters in South Korea. We asked them if they were interested in having an Australian programme, and, if so, what they might be looking for.

It boiled down to one broadcaster, which said it was interested in a package of feature films. We then provided a lot of information as to the feature films that would be available and in their criteria. They previewed these and decided which six films to buy. We then put them in touch with the films' sales agents.

What we did was collect the available materials from a range of different sales agents, put a programme to the broadcasters, and then let the sales agents negotiate their own fee direct. We did the up front work and made it easy for them. The pay-off was that the films could be programmed in a cohesive season.

That, then, is an example of a tangible marketing push which an one single sales agent would be able to undertake.

Exactly.

In terms of the networks in Asia, we talked to the sales agents first about the difficulties they were experiencing in getting into those markets, and what would be helpful for them. In the beginning, it was a general

need for information. So we commissioned a report from KPMG on the television markets in those countries and the regulatory environment. We also heard from the agencies people that what would help them would be to have some of the material filtered for them. We were able to say, "Okay, we can help you by playing a brokerage role."

What has happened on the Asia Pacific in the past couple of years is that the Australian-based sales agents have spent an enormous amount of time developing excellent relationships with people in some of the countries in the region. They are selling a lot of programming there.

I'm not saying the AFC did this on behalf of the agents, I'm simply saying that it has arranged that the agencies that we identified on behalf of the industry were the ones picked up by the industry itself. That leaves us free to do other things. That particularly relates to television programming.

The theoretical issue is incredibly difficult and we wish to undertake programmes and activities that will address the theoretical issues.

One of the major visible functions of the AFC is its supporting Australian producers at festivals and markets like Cannes. Can you outline that function, because it's something that most people here don't see?

The AFC attends three television markets a year, and three feature-film markets.

For people who don't know much about the television markets—in particular, MIP-TV, MIPCOM in Cannes in April and October, and the new MIP Asia, which will be in Hong Kong in December—we provide a big convention space under the AFC banner. Film Australia, the Australian Children's Television Foundation, Our World Film and, at different times, Beyond Films, Beyond Distribution, Total Film and Television, SBS, and so on, use this as a one-stop shopping place. As the companies get bigger, of course, they move off our stand and set up their own separate problem.

At those markets, we provide information for buyers such as catalogues and checklists, and we have concourse language of where programmes are sold. Our data bases provide an incredible array of information that addresses those requirements.

We deal with a lot of questions about co-productions, about partnering with Australians, about location shooting, about the financing mechanisms, etc. We are an information resource.

At the feature-film markets, what we are able to provide is a list of all the Australian film screenings, as well as all of our materials. We can sit down and talk to people about their needs, about what programming they are looking for, so that we can then take that information back to the filmmakers and say, "Company X is really looking for films that have... Why don't you send your script to them."

In other words, you are providing market exposure to Australian producers for markets around the world?

Yes. It comes through regular contact with buyers, reasoning sales, liaison with agents, and through, either through the London office or commission.

We have excellent feedback about our printed materials. The international sales agents, and especially the Australian companies, have incredibly good relationships with their clients and their product is usually known a little. But for a filmmaker who can't afford to travel, doesn't have an agent but has made a documentary which might just be of interest in Austria, Germany, or wherever, the checklists provide access to a spectrum of international buyers.

At those festivals and markets, you also provide a physical space where ad hoc meetings take place, which in turn sparks projects and create their own dynamics.

Those filmmakers who go to the markets have the ability to sit down at the AFC stand and have meetings with people in a professional environment. They have the facilities to preview their programmes, to display their materials. They have the access to marketing staff who can give them advice about whom to see and how to approach them. They have the possibility of being introduced to the people we have met.

That is particularly evident at Cannes, where there is a film festival and a market running concurrently. What we do at Cannes is actually something that we don't normally do anywhere else. Not only, for example, do we assist in buying all the films previewed as widely as possible by the various sections of

Cannes, so that the whole range of Australian films has an opportunity to be considered, but when their films in particular are accepted, we look after the marketing, arrange public relations on behalf of the filmmakers to provide day-to-day support.

In terms of other festivals selected in the official Competitions, depending on the agent and what the status of the films, we provide back-up support. We are there introducing people to each other, including producers

who are there with their projects looking for finance.

There is some criticism of spending money on receptions, but at the Cannes Film Festival the AFC is able, by holding a reception, to introduce the 150 Australians who go each year to the people who buy Australian programmes, to potential financiers, festival directors, the media and film critics. We are offering all the expertise and contacts we have to the Australians in Cannes. And it is amazing how productive that exchange is.

I would have thought that would have to be the most cost-effective dollar spent by the AFC.

Well, it is in my view. It provides the opportunity for Australians to work out marketing business relationships. And I must say the Australians have become effective at that. They come to the party, they are it.

The Australian directors, writers and producers in Cannes are very supportive of the AFC's activities. Nobody says, "I'm too big to go to the Australian parties" and that's great, because we can introduce the diversity of our industry to overseas people.

What, if any, role does the AFC have in marketing Australian films domestically?

Essentially, the domestic marketing role is one that falls in the hands of the domestic distributors and broadcasters. Filmmakers negotiate with those distributors and broadcasters for the exhibition and broadcast of their programmes.

The AFC's relationship to the films lies in its providing them with marketing advice and, in some cases, marketing loan support in order that they can release the films effectively through these various distributors.

What we do in our Industry and Cultural Development branch, for example, is provide infrastructure support for or



grassroots throughout Australia engaged in serious cultural and debate about Australian cinema, the exhibition of diverse programmes of films, and the distribution of Australian programmes, in particular shorts, documentaries and experimental work.

We are trying to support the debate about Australian culture to get people interested in cinema and to stimulate an audience awareness.

Essentially, all the work that we do in Australia is a marketing issue in one respect removed from the actual consumer. The work that we do is our Research and Information section also feeds into the industry's ability to market, promote and assess the performance of Australian programmes.

Would you like a more direct role in marketing and what would that be?

That's an interesting question, because there are differences between what one wishes to do in the home market and one wishes to do overseas.

We are already further down the track in Australia, where audiences are very familiar with Australian television programmes and respond to them extremely well. They are among the top-rating programmes on Australian television. Australian creative requirements on television have helped quality programming to a recognised standard.

In the feature film and theatrical market, there is a lot of skill in promoting Australian films amongst the distributors.

Certainly in the short film, electronic media arts and documentary areas, we would hope to see greater opportunities for discussion of programming, on television and otherwise, mainstream and non-mainstream.

Obviously, there is a policy role there in terms of negotiating and discussing these issues with the industry, which the AFC can and does undertake.

What specific plans do you have for the next 12 months?

We are very keen co-sponsoring programmes we are going to be doing in Germany next year. Not only is it to celebrate 100 years of Australian cinema, but Germany is a country that has not recently been easy for us to sell our films into as a theatrical market.

Is this a cultural barrier?

It's partly a business thing, the cost of releasing films and the risk-taking element. It is also about particular preferences. Each country has its preferences for programmes and these preferences are often cultural.

Presumably if Australian stars and directors were better known, it would become easier.

Indeed! So, what we are doing there is a one-week programme which will tour six cities in Germany. It is a retrospective programme. It is incredibly hard in fact to choose seven evenings, or seven programmes, to represent the diversity of the Australian industry, but we have pulled together a programme and negotiated it with a cinema in each of the six cities. We will publish a catalogue that will be in German.

That's another thing people don't realise. The catalogues attached to these events are often the only thing written in that language about Australian cinema, such as *Le Cinema Australien* for the Australia Retrospective at the Promenade Cinema in Paris.

The German version will take some time. We will have to buy the printed sub title them in German. We will have to secure the

cost of promotion and so on.

What about the advertising? Will the cinema pay for their own?

The relationship with the cinema is a proper commercial relationship. They will be contributing their advertising expenditure.

It's a huge endeavour job. It's something that we have not got support for. Germany is a country with a great interest in indigenous programmes, and Aboriginal cinema have done very well there before. We have knowledge of the market and how to do that.

In that market, for example, will they receive basic co-operation and tangible assistance from the Australian government representatives there, consular and commercial attachés?

We have been working closely with the Consul-General, Public Affairs in Bonn. There is an Australian Trade Promotion happening at that time. We can't dovetail in with all of their requirements and, unfortunately, there isn't adequate money to provide any assistance to us. But we are seeking sponsorship for it, as we did that year with our Foster's event in the UK. We are also looking to do another Foster's event next year.

What else does the Marketing branch do that you consider particularly valuable?

I'd say what we call Screen Support. We provide a wide format advice for filmmakers - which formats are best or most suitable for them to attend, depending on their needs. This is unique.

We provide good introductory materials on subjects such as how to find an agent and how to tell the programme, and targeted advice on where to look for finance for projects in development. We also provide market assessments and marketing information to our Film Development branch colleagues, to help in their discussion making processes.

I would also like to stress the importance of the London office. Although it is small in staff, it is integral to the provision of marketing advice, festivals to markets and market support. It is also a base for Australian producers who can walk in and receive strategic marketing advice.

Our interactions with actors, such as the sector workshops on publicity and personal promotion, are very important and I think the experience, enthusiasm and commitment of the staff constitutes a valuable contribution to the industry.

AUSTRALIAN TOURING FILM FESTIVAL GERMANY 1995

Two nights 8 March, with one week in each venue: Berlin (two venues), Leipzig, Munich, Frankfurt, Cologne, Hamburg. The programme will include: *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (Charles Yarn, 1936) 12 minute fragment, *The Secret sexual Life* (Raymond Longford, 1919), *The Back of Beyond* (John Heyer, documentary, 1934), *Jedda* (Charles Chauvel, 1955) fully-revised 15 min. gen., *It Happened as the Gentle Rain* (Albin Thomas and Bruce Beresford, short, 1963), *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* (Bruce Beresford, 1973), *New Colonial Girl* (Tracey Moffatt, short, 1987), *Down Street* (Wendy Chander, short, 1989), *Night Rider: A Rural Tragedy* (Tracey Moffatt, short, 1990), *No War men* (David Eick, 1993), *The Day of the Dog* (John Magilligan, James Ruckstein, 1993).

WAL SAUNDERS

MANAGER INDIGENOUS BRANCH

REPORT by
PHILIP DUTCHAK



"IF SOMEHOW I OR A ORIGINAL FILMMAKERS
COULD GET A DOLLAR FOR EVERY TIME THAT AN
ABORIGINAL SYMBOL, ICON, SOUND [...] APPEARED
ON SCREEN, IN PRINT OR ON THE RADIO,
MY JOB WOULD BE SO, SO MUCH EASIER."

It is a good point and an old point that Aboriginal symbols are widely used in both exotic on-market Australian product and Australia. It is also a known point that when Aboriginal artists have been reported, the media has usually concentrated on the negative issues rather than the positive ones.

Wal Saunders wants everything to go a bit further.

We (Aborigines) are being portrayed in conventional images. It is becoming almost a stereotype. There are contemporary Aboriginal images that are not focused in the past which have humour, and grace. Our stories are human interest stories. But I'm not seeing much variety here because our stories, our images, are not getting out there. We want to have a say in those images, rather by creating them ourselves or having a say in the creation of them.

This was one of the reasons for the formation of the APC's Indigenous Branch in August of 1993. Saunders says he briefs to really "everything to do with Aboriginal film". At this stage, that includes script assessment, cultural workshops to explain Aboriginal stories to filmmakers, training, seminars, marketing and acting in the gap between for Aboriginal filmmakers in preparing submissions.

According to Saunders, his recent didn't include having money to fund specific Aboriginal films "but, to the APC's credit, they can see a need and they are looking into it". Cathy Robinson, Chief Executive of APC, echoes this: "It would be terrific to allocate more funds for indigenous film projects and that is our intention. We recognise that there are special circumstances here that need particular attention."

In the larger scheme of things, Saunders says a lot of his job is getting people to see Aborigines as more than cardboard cutouts that are slotted onto a film project. He circles himself with

getting the APC to re-define Aboriginal film as more than just a film with Aboriginal content, and runs the APC's series *Heartland* as a success because the good response to the series showed that Aboriginal stories do appeal to a wider audience. Saunders

for the real issue for as a director screen and control. About 30,000 hours of Aboriginal film have been produced over the years. Historically, Aborigines haven't had any say in that. With greater production that's slowly changing, but all more needs to happen.

Filmmaker Neil Leader agrees that even with the theme (the Second Annual Documentary Conference in Canberra three years ago passed a recommendation for non-Aboriginal filmmakers to employ Aboriginal filmmakers as consultants or trainees on related films), sometimes filmmakers aren't always prepared to do the work in training, or collaborating with Aborigines. "It's all about engagement and the terms of that engagement which should probably be defined by Aborigines themselves." Leader says that cuts both ways: either work non-Aborigines working on Aboriginal films or Aborigines being part of someone's project. He points to his involvement on *Wood Brothers* with Rachel Portman: "Sure it was sometimes meddling but it was also wonderful and for Rachel. She is now well-prepared to work as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal film."

In another instance, Ernie Dingo was once not asked to sing "something in language." When Ernie asked what he was supposed to sing, things came to a stop because the script and director had no specific reference to what was required. So they stayed stopped until Ernie had figured out what he was going to say. Even with the inconvenience of losing a day of filming the production, to no credit, had brought him into the project.

Another matter in the format for Aboriginal film. Saunders says he wants Aborigines to have the same chance as anyone in both large- and small-budget films. When it is mentioned that backers would always seek to protect their investment by requiring an experienced paid actor crew for a director regardless of colour, who was doing a large budget project for the first time, Saunders agrees: "It is not that Aborigines don't want to surround themselves with experienced people, it is just that, if it is their project, they want a say in who is coming on-board the film." Leader thinks that Aboriginal access to training is more important than discussions about what format is appropriate: "Until more Aborigines have more access to training, then this whole notion about what format is viable is secondary."

A year on, the Indigenous Branch can point to an increasing recruitment among Aborigines to film and among the more and regional film bodies. It also has been assisting Aboriginal com-

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER LE

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FIGURE 1 Still life, including peonies and narcissus



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will visit Washington, D.C.,
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Hankins will be Year of the Cross.

INQUIRY TO JANUARY 1992
 One letter and one telephone call from George Miller and Peter Wenzel about (Law 1989) - I gave only the 20 minutes of recorded evidence.

THEODORE W. JAFFE, PhD
Theodore W. Jaffe, College Valley and
Lacey, is a 1977 Magazine, reporter and docu-
mentary writer. He is a 1978 National Film
Festival award winner. He is a 1979
National Film Festival award winner.

Release 12: 02 (May 1992)
 Callers (and I) praise the American
 Book of Mormon: Between Abrahams, Isaac
 and Jacob, the Lord, Lightstones and Good

PLANNING TO PRODUCE FILMS
 Camera: Rayburn, Set or Studio: Field
 Sources of Money: Family Finances, Film
 Market of Jobs: The Hollywood Film
 Industry and New Films

NUMBER 41 (OCTOBER 1993)
 Lynn M. Weis, M.D., *Managing a
 Division: 10 Success Strategies*, John
 Campbell and Thomas A. Doonan

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 Queensland: 1000, 1000, 1000, 1000

RESEARCHER'S NOTE: This research was supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) Grant #1008000.

HUMBER 90 (JUNE 1994)
 Second Full-Page Column: 94. Increased
 Journalists' Use of Cell Phone to Report
 News.

RESEARCHER: **DR. JAMES H. HARRIS**
Country: **USA** City: **Northridge, Calif.**
Institution: **California State University, Northridge**

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Rapp, a Nature Artist, Peter Green, a
and The Coast, etc. Michel Comte,
Raphael Holm and Barbara von
Ehrenstein

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, self-esteem, social support, social skills, social support, social skills, social support, social skills*

RECHERCHES DE GÉOLOGIE (1946)
 Et. (Feng) et la belle géologie, l'art
 Chang et les autres de 1946, l'art
 Chang et les autres de 1946, l'art
 Chang et les autres de 1946, l'art

NUMBER 32 (MARCH 1991)
 From 1988 to 1990, the *Journal* was published
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 11 Dupont Circle, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
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 History. The history of the family, My
 Last Days of the World, My Last
 Days of the World, My Last Days
 of the World, My Last Days of the World.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS
 Justin C. Gorman, Department of Psychology,
 University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
 Research on the development of the
 human brain, particularly the
 visual system, is ongoing.

REAGENTS AND INSTRUMENTS
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 Exhibit on my research. The last 1.

RESEARCH ON CLAMBERT TILES
University of Southampton, Peter Wragg
Surrey, The Waterbury and
Glenadyr, pgs. English, plus Kahan,
M. and M. 1973, vol. 2, pgs. 1-2.

NUMBER 47 (MARCH 1993)
 424th General Court, 80th Legislature
 and North Georgia People's Living The
 Blue, Let's Win It! Barbara L. Lammert in *My
 Living Memory*, Janice C. Lammert

HANDS ON! (PART ONE) 1987
Gordon "Big Boy" Ballmann, American
warrior, leader, Big Boy's Soldiers, No
Warriors, One of the Great of the World
club was his.

POUNCE ON (AUGUST 1995)
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 Kasey's City of the Future
 The stages of death in Personal Film
 Historical perspective, Tom Hanks

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Miramax and Australia

— A distinct and bold vision

TONY SAFFORD AND VICTORIA TROOLE

The American company Miramax is one of the success stories of independent distribution. Founded in the mid-1970s by Harvey and Bob Weinstein, the company clearly found a niche at the edges of mainstream cinema, having major success in the U.S. with quality English-language and foreign films from all around the world. Notable examples include *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* (Giuseppe Tornatore, Italy, 1988), *Fella Erobreven* (Fella the Conqueror, Billa August, Denmark, 1988), *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* (Steven Soderbergh, U.S., 1989), *The Crying Game* (Neil Jordan, Ireland, 1992) and *Gato Agua para Chocolate* (Like Water for Chocolate, Alfonso Arau, Mexico, 1992).

Miramax has a strong Australian connection, too, having picked up for U.S. release (during production or on completion) several of the major Australian films of the past decade, including *Strictly Ballroom* (Bar Lukenman, 1992), *Spunkwood* (Mark Joffe, 1992), *The Piano* (Jane Campion, 1993), *Straw* (John Duigan, 1994) and *Alone's Wedding* (R. J. Hogan, 1994).

That Australia connection is to grow even stronger with the recent appointment of Victoria Troole as Acquisitions Captain for Australia and New Zealand. Troole was formerly Executive, Cultural Affairs at the Australian Film Commission, and prior to that its Manager, International Market Development.

Troole's appointment was announced by Tony Safford, Miramax's Executive Vice President of Acquisitions, West Coast Productions during his August trip to Australia.

Though Miramax has its head office in New York, Safford is based in Los Angeles. "The staff in New York usually look more towards Europe," says Safford. "I've been able to look more towards, amongst other places, Australia, which is an area which I previously like quite a bit."

Safford first came to Australia in 1982 when he was working at Sundance Institute, as Director of its internationally-organized Festival. He organized a programme of Australian films, which helped introduce the various sides of local filmmaking to the American industry. Sundance is well known as a key spotting ground for emerging talent.

Two of the people Safford met on that first trip were Victoria Troole and filmmaker Dennis O'Rourke.

A LITTLE PRE-HISTORY: MIRAMAX AND DISNEY

Miramax hit the headlines last year when it was sold to Disney on 30 April 1993. Few could see how a Hollywood studio's "swallowing up" of a tiny independent could mean anything but a further hammering of the final nail in the coffin of independent distribution. Safford admits reliving had concerns himself at the time:

I wasn't had anybody that, as the acquisition of the company was announced and discussed in national ways nationally, that wasn't a concern of the staff. But Harvey and Bob Weinstein are two of the most crazy, tongue, driven, dedicated executives and personalities that exist on the planet.



TONY SAFFORD AND VICTORIA TROOLE (LEFT AND RIGHT, RESPECTIVELY)

In Variety's wrap-up on the deal (3 May), Claudia Eller and John Kuan Hook concluded:

The move marks the latest swirl of sea change in Hollywood, as studios and independents increasingly sign on back licensing marketing and production costs, capture fragmented audiences and scramble for bigger market share. []

In acquiring Miramax, Disney automatically enters into the business of high quality, lower budgeted independent movies—a world dominated by the likes of Irish director Neil Jordan and New Zealand filmmaker Jane Campion, in opposition to Geoly and Mulvey.

Safford agrees:

It's been a remarkably well-structured acquisition. We don't celebrate particularly well what Disney does, they don't understand particularly well what we do. We have very different businesses and we stay out of each other's hair.

But the deal has given us tremendous financial resources to be involved earlier in projects we have wanted to be involved with. Safford links the heavy resources for independent cinema gained in the lead-up to the acquisition with the

seven groups of companies that, for whatever reasons, didn't survive the fallout in the 1980s and the early '90s. Independent cinema on both the filmmaking and marketing-and-distribution sides makes me as wary, very healthy. You are actually testing the experience of U.S. special and distribution, with the studio taking an interest in that sector. Disney acquired Miramax, Turner acquired New Line, Fox struck a specialty division. What they are acknowledging is the value of the marketplace. They are not directly entering it themselves, but acquiring companies that have thrived in it. That's the point: it's a viable business to be in for those who survive, so figured out how to survive.

ACQUIRING DE PRODUCT

As a company, Miramax has shown a steady hand in its selection of product, and an staff a concentration on finding the best way to market a film. Miramax used to handle 20 to 25 pictures a year,

but also figure is expanding. Safford sees Miramax fully functioning up to six features a year, pre-buying another eight and acquiring on completion a further ten.

When Safford moved to Miramax in 1991, the company had already had some success with Australian films:

I've always had an interest in Australian cinema and Miramax had a commercial interest in Australian cinema, going back to its involvement in films like *Map of the Human Heart* (Vicente Ward, 1983) and *Splashwood*. More recent acquisitions include *Country Life* (Michael Blakemore, 1994), *Murphy's Wedding*, *The Piano*, *Strictly Ballroom* and *Sirens*.

The point at which Miramax buys Australian films varies. Miramax became involved in *Sirens*, *Map of the Human Heart* and *Country Life* during production, whereas *Strictly Ballroom*, *The Piano*, *Splashwood* and *Murphy's Wedding* were all bought finished. Safford:

Part of it is a competitive reaction. At what point do we have to be involved? Do we want to invest and see a film finished, or are we confident enough to jump in at an earlier stage? That is an evaluation we make all the time, all over the world.

When asked whether it is becoming more competitive and, therefore, one has to jump earlier, Safford replies:

Yes, of course. It's a function of money. The independent companies which have survived have survived with the right contacts and the right resources. They all can jump in earlier if they want to.

Miramax principally acquiesces for North American distributions, but it can also obtain worldwide rights or distribute on rights for specific territories, including Australia. For example, Miramax distributed *Sirens* and *The Piano* in Australia. Recently, it also acquired the Australian rights for Atom Egoyan's new film, *Eastern Promises*.

This is a new development for Miramax and an unexpected spin-off of the Disney acquisition of the company about 18 months ago. We can now self-distribute through Disney's apparatus in foreign territories.

In Australia, Disney has a relationship with Roushew, so we can go through their system. They have similar relations in UK and, oddly enough, in Scandinavia and Germany. We can do it wherever it makes sense financially.

While Miramax buys from around the world, there is a preference for English-language films. Safford:

Quantitatively it is weighted towards English-language cinema, this being from the UK, Australia and New Zealand—but we have also been a leader in foreign language cinema for an American audience, most recently Kozlovski's *Trouble*. Consider, too, a Cuban film called *Strawberry and Chocolate* and the Mexican movie *Like Water for Chocolate*, which is the highest-grossing foreign language film in the U.S. ever. So, it varies.

No company has a perfect record in selecting films, and it is well-known that Miramax turned both *The Piano* and *The Crying Game* down at script stage. Usually, it picked both up on completion: *The Crying Game* took \$60 million in the U.S., and *The Piano* \$60 million.

THE APPOINTMENT OF TROLE

While Miramax, and people like Safford in particular, have had an interest in Australian cinema, and done good business here, there had been no specific structure for dealing with Australian cinema. That has changed with the appointment of Vanessa Trole. Safford:

By virtue of being (a) for every deal (b) a very productive and important industry for us, we made a decision to bring Vanessa on board as someone to be our acquisition consultant here. She will be our eyes and ears on the ground, to track projects, to be in touch with filmmakers, sales agents and producers, to see work.

When we are involved in production overseas here, Vanessa will function as our executive in charge of production.

We expect the majority of Australian projects to be handled through Vanessa as an important point of judgment on those projects, and so to advocate those projects we should be involved with. Her advocacy will be very important.

I usually believe that projects get made in companies because somebody advocates them, and we expect Vanessa to do that with projects out of this region.

Trole adds:

Obviously it's exciting for me to be connected with a company that is involved, in my view, with not only the most interesting cinema out of cinema out of Australia, but also internationally. It gives the possibility for a range of work to be presented to Miramax that otherwise may not be.

In one sense, a point derived out of the work I did at the AFC for a long time. There is a point of connection between having an understanding of the international marketplace and a reasonably intense level of involvement with Australian cinema, particularly through its cinema development, of both filmmakers and projects. Working with Miramax enables me to draw on my previous experience in a commercial environment.

So, yes, for me, it's fun.

EVALUATING AUSTRALIAN CINEMA

Given Safford's long-term interest in Australian cinema, what is it that he likes about Australian films?

Well, it's hard to characterize a national cinema in any way that makes sense, but there is a distinct quality to it and that can occur in cinema genres, whether it be *Strictly Ballroom* or *The Piano*, which are radically different but both extremely well-directed films. They have a strong individual voice behind each of them, and that is a quality of cinema we respond to very much.

If there is a common strand amongst filmmakers like Quentin Tarantino, Robert Altman, Peter Jackson, Jane Campion and Rina Laskowski is that they have very distinct and bold voices.

In the 1970s, there were some commercial successes associated with Australian films. One was an accident: Americans had trouble understanding (which is why a film like George Miller's 1979 *Mad Max* was dubbed for U.S. release). Safford believes such problems belong to the past.

Off the top of my head I don't see any problems. In fact, you have a kind of career advantage in that you are not marginalised economically in the way foreign language cinema is. You have a degree of accessibility in the U.S. that other countries don't, and yet you have a degree of distinction, if that's a word, that foreign language cinema also has.

So, you immediately have breakout potential by virtue of being distinct and by virtue of being in the English language. It's a very tricky line to walk, but you can hit it more often than not. The success of Australian cinema, not just in Miramax but broadly speaking in the U.S., bears that out.

Whereas some Australian filmmakers view their work as marginalised by being at the low-budget end of production, Safford disagrees:

I don't think it's a function of budgets. On one hand, we are all dealing in some broad notion of independent cinema and, yes, that's to some extent a budget issue, a financial issue, but the hope is you overcome that with a sense of cinema, a sense of distinctness that is frequently lacking in the studio films.

In some cases, independent cinema is marginalized, but the best of Australian cinema and the best of UK cinema can captivate on that distant quality which that marginality and have beyond it.

At the end of the 1970s and during the '80s, one often had to force oneself to get enthusiastic about Australian cinema. However, in the '90s things changed, with many new people and approaches to cinema emerging. Treloir agrees:

I actually think that what has happened over the past five years is that the Australian industry has reached a measure of maturity. That has flowed from a very intelligent structure of government assistance to film that sees the importance of the relationship between training, the development of new talent, the development and nurturing of the established industry, and production finance for both areas.

1988 did, despite the storm of abuse that has been heaped on it, give the opportunity for a few people to make their first-time Devises O'Rourke made his first 35mm short documentaries through BIFA, Bill Bennett made his first film that way, and you made your first. It wasn't all bad.

But the experience of making a tax-driven investment system was never going to build a kind of sector base from which one could finance movies. So, the establishment of the FFC in 1988 was a very intelligent response to that situation. The industry was extremely fortunate to have a visionary like Ken Williams (Chief Executive, AFC, 1983-88), who could identify the long-term needs of the industry and figure out the best way of providing for them. It was equally fortunate to have a federal government which was responsive to the structures proposed.

Since then, there has been a tremendous development in the level of sophistication of that government's understanding of the industry, its level of connection with the international industry, and its ability to provide a level of assistance in terms of putting projects together in collaboration with filmmakers, producers, directors and writers.

There's either the Film Fund, which helps first-time filmmakers with budgets over \$10m (I have the reluctance to use the "cheat relief" because I do think there is a lot more to it than a totally useless process). Again, in the experience, has matured, what you've seen is a consistency of access to finance for first-time projects that doesn't exist anywhere else in the world.

I also think that we are in a situation which allows for continued regeneration, for the fact that people will come up through the ranks, make their first movie, and establish a reputation sufficient to attract significant amounts of international finance for their next project.

Once these people get off the ground, they don't necessarily need the structure that exists in Australia. But some would rather use forms of assistance available here in order to train a complete cinema filmmaker over their work.

As well, you have the AFC still providing finance for short projects and documentaries that are more subjective than the domestic documentaries are interested in being involved with. Plus, it can do one or two low-budget first feature films each year.

Safford adds:

What you are seeing, in fact, is neither worse beyond that, and that is the contrary case to that of international companies – Mafama, Polygram, Pandora – that consciously or not in a reflection of the quality, and the international industry, of the work that is developing. That's a sign to those from foreign shores that the moving structures seem to be working very well.

Treloir:

You are always hearing "Australian cinema is overrated." Look in all this stuff that is being produced. But the reply is that each year now there are at least a handful of projects that get made which actually work. Importantly, they work with our audiences.

We have a higher level of Australian feature being exhibited theatrically in Australia than potentially ever before. These films are also working for foreign audiences. They are genuine.

A CRITICAL CULTURE

While Australia has developed a film industry, what of the critical culture that surrounds it? Safford has concerns in this area:

Thinking about *The Piano's* winning the Palme d'Or last year, I was struck by the fact that the confirmation of the value of Australian cinema has had to be generated abroad. It wasn't generated internally. That surprised me.

Treloir:

I think that might be a bit harsh, in the sense that Cannes represented the first time *The Piano* was seen. As an executive in a smart marketing company, you would make the value of that promotion for the release of the film.

Maybe so, but how well would have *The Piano* done here without that mind-blowing advance notice? Even a filmmaker seems very only released here after a special strategy, and to reach publicity, in America. Treloir:

I'm not saying there is no truth in what Tony is saying. But it's always been a smart thing to do in terms of marketing Australian movies domestically to get the stamp of approval, critical or commercial, overseas first.

Safford:

But why should that be? Why should you have to go offshore for that stamp of approval?

Treloir:

I could actually make a comment about the profitability of cinema of cinema in Australia, but I don't think that that is necessarily a smart idea. Outside of *Cinema Papers*, there is no critical approval worth much in Australia.

I do think, however, that people now see a little progress in their assumptions that is, they are not expecting every single winner to be *The Piano* or *Secret* or *Rampart* or *Scooper* or whatever. I think there is a bit of broadness there, a bit more openness.

Safford:

A part of that is a question of marketing and publicity, but there is a question of critical consciousness. Maybe there are larger issues there on a no Australian national identity.

It's up to AFC to remember: The BFI has taken on a bold political agenda. The AFC should be doing for *Cinema Papers* for what it is doing to stimulate the critical film culture here.

Treloir adds:

More than that, *Cinema Papers* is now the one film publication. In my experience, it is widely read, here and internationally, and is the only thing that people can look to for a critical view.

One of the things that *Cinema Papers* has done consciously is actually make out, and provide a forum for, new, younger critics. Some of the most interesting people writing about films in Australia have actually come up through the ranks of *Cinema Papers*, because they have been encouraged to do reviews and so on. So, without this kind of publication, there is no forum for people to develop their skills and have their critical opinions about cinema.

1. Edme's note: This and the following comments in *Cinema Papers*, since its inception, were not prompted by my opinion. This premise, however, caused some editorial concern in as much as these columns may be viewed as self-promotion. However, as it was felt by all involved that similar comments about my other film magazine would not have given me to my editorial content, these comments were left as quieted.

Australia's First Films:

Part Eleven: Aborigines and



W. Baldwin Spencer (1860-1929) and Frank J. Gillies (1871-1913), producers of several Australian ethnographic films, 1901. Photos by courtesy of Glen Berry, Wellington, New Zealand

Soon after January 1901's Federation celebrations were recorded on Australia's first feature-length film¹, increasingly basic production gear promoted new local applications of the art. During that Autumn, Baldwin Spencer shot the first major coverage of Australian Aboriginal life, and Clement Mason produced the first story film narrating some of the Australian songs. These contrasting efforts were both achieved with Warwick Bioscope cameras, which finally rendered the Lumière Cinématographe obsolete.

New Century, New Technology

Before Federation, most movie cameras also served as projectors, and had a film capacity of 100 feet (90 seconds) or less.² Longer films had to be broken into parts or "reelases" with pauses for re-loading.³ This impeded the shooting and presentation of complex narratives. Producers tended to construct visual stories with only one camera set up in each scene-long film roll.

A few expensive projectors like the Edison provided 1,000 feet (18 min) capacity for unbroken programme presentation. Comparable camera loads were available in Britain after 1898, when A. J. Forsyth introduced his "No. 4" camera with 300 feet magazines.⁴ However, no evidence of this camera's usage in pre-Federation Australia has been found.

In Australia, the first extended-load camera to be advertised and sold in quantity was the Warwick Bioscope, first reported by its local agents, Baker & Ross, early in 1901.⁵ Manufactured by Alfred Darling and sold in London by Charles Urban's Warwick Trading Company⁶, its ability to film lengthy occurrences and performances gave it unprecedented potential for serious recording and creative story-telling.

The Warwick Bioscope camera was available in two models: the "A", with externally-fired 1,100-foot (25 min) magazines, mainly intended for studio use, and the "B", with internally-fired 150 feet (2.5 min) magazines.⁷ Loads of various focal lengths were available for use with them, and the film transport was sensitive and more durable than its Lumière predecessor. An ethnographic feature was Warwick's "view finder", consisting of a bung-hole beside the lens to let the operator look at the film in the gate.⁸ One could then focus the image onto the film and check the limit of the field of view, but the image was upside-down, reversed and skewed obliquely. It took time to master its usage.

SPENCER AND GILLIES

When Baldwin Spencer first filmed Australian Aborigines in 1901, he had no preparation for the task and only the resources of newspapers were supplied. He had been drawn to the work partly by chance.

Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860-1929) was the son of a wealthy Manchester industrialist with a typically conservative mid-Victorian background. At 10, Spencer's artistic aptitude had been

FACTS AND FABLES

Actors



Below, left: Watson & Jones portable camera, model "B", loaned to Rolf Spruce with 110 feet of safety film magazine, as used by Rolf Spruce in 1935. This particular camera was used to produce the Central Australia Expedition's film in 1935, including *The Redcliff Aborigines*. Photo by courtesy of John Gifford, Lismore, New South Wales. Spruce is right in the foreground. Below: Watson & Jones portable camera, model "B", loaned to Rolf Spruce with 110 feet of safety film magazine, as used by Rolf Spruce in 1935. Photo by courtesy of John Gifford, Lismore, New South Wales.

Right: The Watson & Jones portable camera, model "B", loaned to Rolf Spruce with 110 feet of safety film magazine, as used by Rolf Spruce in 1935. Photo by courtesy of John Gifford, Lismore, New South Wales. Spruce is right in the foreground. Below: Watson & Jones portable camera, model "B", loaned to Rolf Spruce with 110 feet of safety film magazine, as used by Rolf Spruce in 1935. Photo by courtesy of John Gifford, Lismore, New South Wales.

briefly considering a career in that direction, training at the Manchester School of Arts.¹⁰ However, he decided to pursue medicine and won a scholarship to Oxford in 1881.¹¹ There, he was largely educated at the University Museum in the age of Darwinian debate and the rise of the science of anthropology. A keen amateur photographer from 1884¹², his skill and his artistic training were to prove a boon in recording his life ethnographic expeditions.

Influenced to travel by his mentor Henry Moseley, naturalist on the Challenger expedition which circumnavigated the world in 1872-6¹³, the 37-year-old Spruce became the first Professor of Biology at the University of Melbourne, a chair which he held for 32 years.¹⁴ His new ecological and botanical surroundings gave him territory to explore, describe and classify. There were exploratory field trips to Kang Island (1887), to Queensland's Burnett River in search of langbeils (1891), and he almost joined a planned expedition to the Arnhem.¹⁵

In 1894, Spruce was appointed as biologist and photographer on an expedition to Central Australia financed by the philanthropist W. A. Hoar. Travelling fourteen weeks by camel up the Overland Telegraph line from the railhead at Oodnadatta, Spruce exhibited a talent for making fast and copious field records.¹⁶ He was the first scientist to visit Ayers Rock, taking an

extensive photographic record of the regions inhabited by the Arnhem peoples.¹⁷ As a tiny telegraph station called Charles Waters, eight days north of the railhead, Spruce did his most active biological work and encouraged the resident telegraphist, P. M. Byrne, to prepare a paper on Aboriginal customs.¹⁸

It was on the Horn Expedition that Spruce met his future collaborator, Frank Gillen (1835-1912), at Alice Springs. General, John Gillen, the son of an Irishman, former telegraphist and postmaster at Alice Springs, stimulated Spruce's interest in Aboriginal life. Their subsequent friendship and joint field trips led to their publication of *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (Macmillan, London, 1899), a seminal work in Australian anthropology.

In 1899, Spruce became the Director of the National Museum of Victoria.¹⁹ With the dual institutional base of the University and the Museum, Spruce was now in a position to get support for an extensive Central Australian Expedition with Gillen. Gillen, also an amateur photographer, was well placed to facilitate the mission. As the senior South Australian public servant in the region between Oodnadatta and Darwin, Sub-Procurator of Aboriginals and local Magistrate, he was a popular public figure.²⁰

Financed by a group including David Syme (proprietor of Melbourne's *The Age and Leader*), Spruce's wealthy father and the South Australian Government²¹, the expedition reached the practical planning stage late in 1900.

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPH

Spruce's exemplar warning correspondence makes it difficult to say exactly what inspired him to make massive pictures of *Aboriginal life*. On 16 September 1900, replying to a letter from Spruce, now lost, Gillen said: "Cinemagraphy is a good if the funds will run it, but I think phonograph records of conversations are even more important."²²



Warwick fluorograph camera, 1904 (interior view, left) and shooting diagram (right) from *Antropometrie Photographica* (London, 23 May 1901, p. 23). Triquet of the French camera is of the following 30 years: it was a considerable departure from the conventional photographic camera design which provided in *Consigne* (John Corbels, left) and *Mag. L'Esprit* (1901) (right).

Both of these field recording techniques were pioneered by Spencer's colleagues, A. C. Haddon, on a Torres Strait expedition in 1898.¹¹ Haddon's films included the first ones ever taken of Australian Aborigines¹², but their history placed them in the experimental category. Haddon wrote to Spencer on 23 October 1900, urging him to explore the medium's potential more fully:

You really must make a kinematograph – or biograph – or whatever they call it in your part of the world. It is an indispensable piece of anthropological apparatus. Get an ordinary commercial one. If you order from London I think I would place myself in the hands of the Warwick Trading Coy., 4 Warwick Court, High Holborn W. C. I have asked them to send you a catalogue & so write to you as well. I have stated what you want or like. I have no doubt that your films will pay for the whole apparatus if you care to let some of them be copied by the trade.¹³

A cryptic comment in a letter from Gillies to Spencer on 18 December 1900 implies that Haddon supplied them with their movie camera:

If Haddon intends himself on the purchase of the one, we should get the latest improved construction. Have you had any experience in working the machine & if not where are you going to get it?¹⁴

It was a practical question. Spencer had already written to Haddon saying:

I was at hopes that you would have given me some idea as to how much film to take with me as I have had no experience as to how far I can get to help out here.¹⁵

A Biograph camera was nevertheless ordered from Warwick, and film came through the Melbourne agency of Baker & Ross. James Angus Johnson of Adelaide donated a superb Edison “Cinet” photograph to the expedition to allow them to record “Aboriginal speech and song”, complementing a field recording onto the equal of anything available in 1901.

With this bulky equipment, Spencer and Gillies set off northwards from the Oodnadatta railroad on 19 March 1901. They were accompanied by South Australian Trooper Harry Chance (1856–1911) as driver, cook and handy man, and two Aborigines, Paranda and Ekkilaka from Charlotte Waters, to handle their twenty horses. The film and audio gear was only a tiny part of their outfit. They took a year's provisions, partly in their two large wagons and partly cached in supply boxes en route.

Three days out, at Serpentine's Creek, they initially put the photograph to work¹⁶, recording Aborigines who were “very much excited and interested” to hear their own voices:



First Film: Charlotte Waters

Filming commenced on 3 April 1901 at Charlotte Waters in Arrernte tribal territory, the site of Spencer's Horn Expedition work. Spencer later admitted his complete ignorance of centre a trophy:

It was a Warwick [camera ...] A diagram showed how to fix the film in the machine, so as to make it run round, but no instructions had been sent out as to what route to run the handle, so I had to make it go as then. The focusing glass was, of necessity, small and you could only get a sideways and not a direct view of it, but, after a little practice with a blank speed, I felt equal to a first attempt in real life [...] We had no idea of what the [...] ceremony was going to be like, so that all I could do was to stand the machine on one side of the ceremonial ground, which was simply an open space in the scrub, focus for about the centre of it and hope for the best. The lens allowed for a fair depth of focus, but the field of vision covered by the natives was large and I had no, as in more recent machines [you had ...] making it possible to follow up the action if they moved about very much from side to side of the ceremonial ground.

When the performers came on to the ground I was ready for them, and started guiding away as steadily as I could at the handle, though, at first, the tension was great to vary the rate of running to suit the rapid or slow movements of the performers. To be successful in cinematography [...] you had to suppress your feelings, and not be full to the mouthful of an experienced barrel-organ grinder, who, I then realised, can often run as hard as he can to be a success.



Edison “Cinet” photograph, as used in 1901 by Editha Spencer and Frank Gillies to record Aboriginal speech and song in Central Australia. It was the “Editha Report” of Photography, using centre stage was replaced 1 inches in diameter to provide extra volume and clarity.

The chief difficulty was that the performers every now and then ran off the ground into the surrounding scrub, returning at uncertain intervals of time, so that now and again, in the rapid notes of their suddenly reappearing, and fearful of missing anything of importance, I ground on and on, securing a record of a good deal of unnecessary material but very little surplus.¹⁰

The mobility of the performers was the issue of their worries. They underemphasised the length and complexity of the ceremony to be recorded, as Spencer confided in his diary:

The ceremonies last usually about 10 minutes & in my film only runs 3 minutes. I have to keep stopping when they get to a monotonous part which means that every now and then there will be a kind of blur on the screen – that is all the film by good luck develops at all well.¹¹

Filming conditions were uncomfortable:

You will observe [a sketch of] what I require [filming] under these conditions with a native holding an umbrella so as to keep off the light and a little bit of heat. It took this considerable worrying me all the time. It is not all enjoyment.¹²

The ceremonies filmed were mostly of a sacred secret nature. Gillen was able to witness them as he was an initiate of the Anangu tribe, and Spencer was introduced as Gillen's "passage brother".¹³ Both researchers had privileged access to Anangu ceremonial life:

Our freedom of access to the tribes at all times was simply due to the fact that we were regarded as initiated members. Word was passed on from one tribe to another, and we were always cordially welcomed. Otherwise, our mission would have been hopeless, for only initiated members are allowed to be present, and no outsider would never know that the ceremonies – ceremonies extending for months on end – were going on.¹⁴

After making each film, careful notes were taken:

When it is over, Gillen and I get one or two of the oldest men to sit down with them to tell us what it all means. This often takes a good deal of time because the old men hold longer & very tedious discussions about things. Then I write it all down in our journal & get all the photo apparatus ready for the next perform-ance.¹⁵

The detail recorded photographically and verbally was obviously privileged information. Any analysis of its content must therefore remain beyond the level of this article, which is concerned only with Spencer's filmmaking methods.

No attempt was made to shoot film with synchronous sound, although songs from some filmed ceremonies were separately recorded. The photographs and in thirty records were returned to Adelaide from Charlotte Waters the day after filming began¹⁶, so avoid further risk of breakage to the fragile wax cylinders. They arrive in the British Institute of Recorded Sound.¹⁷ A few duplicates are held by the University of Adelaide's Barr Smith Library, and by the Museum of Victoria.¹⁸

The film equipment, while not being so fragile, was untreated. Gillen and Spencer only had field processing facilities for "wet" photographs. After filming at Charlotte Waters concluded, the exposed footage was sent to that and seven more calico bags for dispatch to Melbourne on 8 April 1901.¹⁹ There, Baker & Rowe acted as agents for the processing work, which was done by the Salvation Army Luncheon Department²⁰ – their first contractual work since filming *The Investigation of the Australian Commonwealth* in Sydney three months earlier.²¹ Spencer and Gillen had to wait anxiously for news of their results, which eventually reached them via the Overland Telegraph.



Robert Spencer filming at Charlotte Waters, 8 April 1901

A self-portrait taken by Spencer, based on one in his personal photo album. Spencer is holding an umbrella to shield his face. The sketch confirms that Spencer was using the Warrick model "B", with vertical 135 film magazine.



Right: Route of the Spencer-Gillen expedition of 1901. The anthropologists travelled north from the Gulf of Carpentaria along the Overland Telegraph's last branching off into the north north of Purnululu and reaching the Gulf of Carpentaria in November 1901. From *Light* (Melbourne), 15 October 1904, p. 767. By courtesy of Chris Harvey.

FINAL FILMS AT ALICE SPRINGS

Leaving Charlotte Waters telegraph station on 10 April 1901, Spencer and Gillen travelled north along the Overland Telegraph line, reaching Alice Springs on 22 April. Three days later, they found that the film camera's wooden magazine had warped.

The first was to get it and to dry that, after the camera had been exposed and used for some time, the wood began to shrink and slight cracks made their appearance. It needed constant watching, and stuffing the cracks up with black waxed and goosegrease-press resin, to keep the machine tight again! I decided that it would be wiser to use up the film, of which we had 3,800 feet, before leaving the Macdonnell Ranges, from which they could easily be sent down to Melbourne to be developed and kept safe.¹³

Another reason to use up the film at Alice Springs was that it would only involve 'the Aborigines [Aboriginals], who know us well'.¹⁴

The Alice Springs shoot began on 27 April 1901 with the public Yanyanilla corroboree. Gillen recorded their first loss of raw stock:

One of the late film unfortunately slipped out of its holder [magazine] and was utterly spoiled which was no less to us of 50' worth of film. Each film is 150 feet in length and costs us in London 4d. per foot. The late stomach affected by the dry atmosphere and we are in constant fear of light getting in the film.¹⁵

On 30 April news came up the telegraph line that their Charlotte Waters films had reached Baker & Ross in Melbourne. Gillen's concern persisted:

We are anxiously awaiting telegraphic news of their development. Should they turn out well, we shall feel quite happy, if on the other hand they are fogged then there is little hope of the remaining films being of much account.¹⁶

Spencer continued to film ceremonies at Alice Springs concerned by these fears. He was plagued by dust and heat, and on 2 May another problem arose:

I ran a hundred feet film through the cinematograph, but, to my disgust, found, on opening the box at the [film] darkness, that the greater part of it had somehow slipped off the edge and had simply wound itself up inside the camera, out of which it sprung and spread in long coils on the floor across to the lid was opened. Fortunately I had stuffed up all chinks in the rim with red turkey baize, excepting small ones in the roof that could not be got at and only admitted a very dim light. After more than an hour's toilers with a sawn file the coils and re-wound the film which, luckily, was not much the worse for the mishap.¹⁷

Spencer's faith in motion pictures was not shared by Gillen, who on 5 May recorded another problem in filming native ceremonies:

[] the confounded performers, two in number, instead of performing within the field covered by the lenscope, made a wide semicircular sweep which took them out of the field and practically wasted a film. Used language, Spencer yelled loudly and as provokingly as he could and philosophically 'it's no use getting excited'.¹⁸

The expedition's shoot concluded at Alice Springs on 11 May 1901.¹⁹ More than 40 minutes of film had been taken—more film than had been devoted to any single subject in Australia up to that

time. (Gillen's women's corroboree, filmed by Spencer at Charlotte Waters on 4 April 1901. An edition of *Aboriginals* were out of his department in the shooting one that has been excluded from the 'roll', which was published in the *Melbourne Leader*. This was the only public ceremony shot at Charlotte Waters, and is the only Charlotte Waters film now sitting in the unopened viewing room.)

Robert Taupoula's corroboree, filmed by Spencer at Alice Springs late in April 1901. This roll from Spencer's *Wentworths in 1901* Australia (1918) edition survives a film of the same scene. The ceremony was not sacred, and is one of the publicly accessible viewing room.



time. It recorded *Aborigine* life so close to the core of as first contact with white culture that its value is incalculable.

Spencer and Gillen were aware of the cultural value of this footage as they waited for news of the success of its processing. On 15 May 1901, Gillen was elated when telegraphic news of their Charlotte Waters footage arrived from Melbourne:

Baker and Ross report films exposed fairly correct [] but cautions me for safety from objects when [] Extreme care required in handling films, those exposed longer marked from damp in pointing out hands [] We have every reason to be satisfied with Baker & Ross's report 'fairly correct' is an excellent mark considering the conditions under which the films were exposed []²⁰

The camera and the final film were sent to Melbourne four days before the expedition left Alice Springs on 24 May 1901.²¹ Spencer and Gillen went north, eventually crossing the continent to Borroloola on the Gulf of Carpentaria in November.²² Only women's notes and 'roll' photographs were used to record their later ethnographic data. By the time of their return to Melbourne on 17 March 1902²³, they'd been away for just over a year.

SPENCER'S FILM EXHIBITIONS

At Melbourne's Town Hall on 7 July 1902, Spencer gave the world's first major public screening of ethnographic film.²⁴ 2,000 feet (30 mins) of film were apparently prepared for the lecture as a vote of £84²⁵, with a further 100 slides granted from the expedition's magazine by J. W. Lums.²⁶ Selections from the field recordings as well as slides were also played. Although high attendance prices of one and two shillings were charged, capacity crowds turned out and removed the lecture enthusiastically.²⁷

It marked the life of the Aborigine from birth to death: physical appearance, environment, material technology, social systems and finally ceremonial life. Sacred secret material was screened without thought or hesitation, and Spencer later confirmed that he had typically spent a number of the period, as his introduction to the book he wrote with Gillen in 1904, *The Northern Tribes*



ROLLS SHOT BY GILLEN AND SPENCER

A. Filmed at Chalkley's Warren (now abandoned), Northern Territory

- 3 April 1900 Reel (1) Kaituma men ceremony
- Reel (2) Nind men ceremony
- Reel (3) Oolthia make ceremony
- 4 April 1900 Reel (4) Kangaroo ceremony
- 5 April 1900 Reel (5) Kaituma ceremony
- 6 April 1900 Reel (6) Uuntha women's corroboree

B. Filmed Atsoral Alice Springs, Northern Territory

- 27 April 1900 Reels (7) (8) and (9) Tjupingalla corroboree
One of the three reels was spoiled
- 28 April 1900 Reels (10), (11) and (12)
Tjupingalla corroboree
- 30 April 1900 Reel (13) Tjupingalla corroboree
- 1 May 1900 Reel (14) Englebarok ceremony
- 2 May 1900 Reel (15) Englebarok ceremony
Film partly spoiled
- 3 May 1900 Reel (16) Kaituma men ceremony
- 4 May 1900 Reel (17) Uolthiranga wedding preparation
- 5 May 1900 Reel (18) Uuntha (Sun's) ceremony
- 8 May 1900 Reel (19) Kaituma or big lizard ceremony
- 10 May 1900 Reel (20a) Sacred ceremony of the great herd of Anala
- 11 May 1900 Reel (20b) Wan (Anngait) dance
(containing 50 feet of lost reel)

of Central Australia. The three ceremonies were, Spencer told [...] without double elaboration, but at the same time (they were) extremely crude and savage in all essential points. It must be remembered that these ceremonies were performed by naked, howling savages [...]!"

Shifting ceremony grounds now to record Spencer's ethnographic interest to present an assessment of the evidence in his field notes and photographic records.

Spencer's unique "commitment" was delivered about 50 years in Melbourne and in provincial centres.¹⁷ It improved Melbourne University's public standing, and its finances, when both were at a low ebb. An announcement had embroiled £24,000 from University funds in 1901.¹⁸ More than £100 was raised by Spencer's first two lectures alone.¹⁹

Gillen gave similar lectures in Adelaide, starting on 24 July 1902²⁰, but his play days were transient. His last decade was spent with progressive paralysis of muscular function.²¹ Spencer purchased Northern Territory films after Gillen's death in 1912, but this was partly due to the Commonwealth Government's conservation J. P. Campbell²², and it lacks the pioneering creativity of the earlier footage.

1901 SPENCER-GILLEN FILMOGRAPHY

3,000 feet (90 mins) of raw film was taken into Central Australia on 20 rolls, each 150 feet (2 mins 30 secs approx.) long. 2,547 feet (82 mins 20 secs) purportedly survive²³, so that those rolls of 150 feet have been lost. Two were spoilt in the field, so perhaps only one or two were lost after words in processing or in acetate decomposition. According to Ian Doolan, the films were in two tin tins at the Museum of Victoria in the 1960s, one holding negatives and

the other holding prints.

All of the expedition's film was taken in Arrente country (spelt "Aranta" by Spencer), and it wholly portrayed Arrente ceremonies. All but the Uuntha women's corroboree and the Tjupingalla corroboree are sacred secret ceremonies, customarily unavailable for viewing. Some parts of the Tjupingalla are unacceptably missing from the viewing print. Most of the film cannot be viewed by uninitiated men, as by women.

Earlier accounts state that most of the 150 foot reels contain more than one shot, and many contain more than one scene to set-up.²⁴ The estimated 16 mins completion reel is only roughly in chronological order²⁵, without any identifying titles and with some parts out of their correct sequence. Double prints show the number of rolls shot in each ceremony, but, without being able to view them, we can only rely on the rough detail provided by the diaries of Gillen and Spencer (see table on left).

Continued on page 11

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Technicalities

COMPILED BY DOMINIC CASE

Please allow me...

After three editions as Technical Editor of *Cinema Papers*, I suppose it's about time to publish a "hello!" note, together with my thoughts on how the "Technicalities" section of the magazine should work.

So this is it.

No one ever knows where to classify film. This magazine may turn up at the newspaper next to the photography page or with the teenage pop and video range. Colleagues run film courses in their media departments, in their English and Languages schools, in Sociology and Fine Arts or with Electrical Engineering. Cinema is fast across to television and to literature, with drops of chemistry, computing and commerce all running through its veins. There's something for everyone.

If *Cinema Papers* has an obvious viewpoint in the rest of its editorial, it is its focus on the craft aspects of cinema. And my purpose in "Technicalities" will be to focus on the relationship between the creative messages and the technology that's used to convey them — mostly specifically from the technology side. In other words, instead of concentrating on the rivets of buttons on a new game, I'd like to discuss how the operator uses them, and what good they are to anybody other than the operator. Can the director tell the story silently? Does the audience see a different picture? And does the text — or the image — have a different job to do because of the technology?

Of course, we'll still review new (and not-so-new) bits of hardware from time to time,

but such is the speed of technological change that it's hard for a bi-monthly magazine to keep up with the more "newy" bits of industry development. I'm looking forward to hearing from people with ideas, topics or even the slightly longer-term news stories.

I want to avoid the film-versus-video conflict. I can't deny using a "film person", but I don't think it's important whether a particular technique uses silver — just as said. There is a tendency for stories about electronic systems to be more hardware-oriented (or software-oriented, which amounts to the same thing). It's what the manufacturer has decided you want to do, whereas film systems get you more aware of what's actually going on. So the stories have to be about the way the tools are used. Every digital effects artist — and Postproduction of the rest of the industry — will rush to disagree, and of course they're right. But the tools and what-ifs are so daunting, it's sometimes hard to get past them.

The editor's "Technicalities" only barely fits the bill. Films, in typical of the new dazzling digital applications that are setting the creative pace these days. Perhaps the most interesting aspect is that, like so much stimulating technology, the system started its life in Australia, but needed foreign support to get finished and to reach a world market. Meanwhile, the shorter stories — on a film-making museum in Riverstone, and a gadget bag manufacturer in Camperdown — emphasise the enormous range of disciplines to be found in the industry.

— Dominic Case



Flame at Complete Post

Three years ago, Peter Webb left Melbourne for Hollywood, on a short trip to work on the feature *Super Mario Bros* (Rocky Morton, 1993). His job was to set up the Australian-constructed Flame digital-effects system, and train the American effects team in its use. Now he's back home, to bring the latest Flame system to Complete Post in Melbourne. I spoke with him and with Chris Schwartz, owner and manager of Complete Post.

What is Flame?

WEBB: It's a digital work station, which does resolution-independent compositing and visual effects. That means, being a computer, it doesn't really care whether you're running in PAL or NTSC, 600 resolution or whatever. It's just a matter of configuring the system.

How is it different from other packages that are around?

WEBB: In Flame, we do work in a 3D environment, but at present we're working with two-

dimensional planes of images. We bring something in. We can apply 3D extension functions to it. We can light it. We can apply surface texture. We can distort it in a range of different ways. But we can never distort in four 3D.

Experimentally, there is a version of Flame that will handle 3D objects, but commercially it's not really operating yet. So you wouldn't attempt something like Jurassic Park [Steven Spielberg, 1993] for example, which is full 3D models. But I've done work on Star Trek: First Contact with a broad range of tasks, and amongst those some of it was creating environments from scratch. On other jobs, I've been compositing elements that were shot in different places and putting them together to look seamlessly integrated.

SCHWARTZ: If you have a 3D model coming in—like a 3D dinosaur, for example—you can render that away from Flame, and then bring it in fully rendered in 3D, and incorporate that model into the film in the video. It does use

external inputs like 3D modelling. You can integrate all sorts of things. For example, if someone has done some claymation, and they want to integrate it into a film, they might shoot it on green screen or blue screen. You might use a range of models, some computer 3D animation, and then use them to integrate all of that together into the final product.

Peter, who are some of the business you've worked on?

WARRIOR On *Super Mario Bros.*, which was a couple of years ago, we had a team of about 12 operators working on Flame systems. We did more than 150 shots for the movie. We did quite a bit of the flame fire sequence and a lot of blue screen work. Actors were shot against a blue screen stage and their combined with flame and fire. And now...

Now say you use work as *like* revolution. Now what's getting in and out of that: getting back in, like?

WELL, it's actually kind of interesting because the software for Flame was written in Metasploit. It isn't then picked up by a Command Compiler, which is developing and classifying it. The file in turn out process, which is called file in file - it comes from file analysis on an file, and what happens in the middle is all digital - we pull through of Kordis's General, which was also developed in Metasploit. We just moved the word from

How have things changed, way to see these ideas, the world:

There's a light but it's not available in Melbourne. We supply the negative in Kodak which means the optimum number of frames that we specify. We get that back in digital form on Easystyle data tape. They send our work, get it put out on Easystyle tape, then it goes back to Kodak. They then use tape simulation film to reproduce the look of the film.

He hopes to eventually start his own firm with wife, Christine, and son.

WEEK 11 You cannot run the only people that do it, but that was the idea that we chose for that week to also provide.

Effect of temperature on the rate of reaction

WEBB: Worldwide, people use 2560 lines, which is roughly 1000 to 1500 pixels. It really depends on the aspect ratio of the particular picture that you're watching. That's a very much narrower

If you read of *Run Run Run* I've just finished, Terrence's intellectivity is what is different to the other ones. Because it wasn't really a fantasy movie, it is a sort of spy drama written in the air with people pushing all the pieces. We shot a lot of blue screen footage and composed shots are a little more stage and natural cast footage. There'll be a few shots of straight natural cast stuff, there's a couple of effects shots, and then beyond that there'll be a few shots of live action stuff. Nobody can pick the difference.

an instance of distributor-company friction with the move came out of the least surprising and best: "There aren't very many titles in that movie are there?" There are, he just couldn't

When are the most pro-effective in life? Are they the fantasy-land ones, where it's something totally surreal, or are they the ones where you're trying to be totally realistic?

WILL Both, really. On Super-Man's Box, we did a shot where him is hurtling through a big crystal cave, and the entire environment was all created within Flame. It's a multi-plane three-dimensional scene happening which looked almost photorealistic, and yet very much a far from scene. I really enjoyed doing that.

On *Reverend Velocity*, as for some shows where the director's specific instruction was "We don't want the audience's attention to be drawn away from the story. We want that to run through all of them even questioning it." They're not going to promote *Reverend Velocity* as an explicit message, because that's not what it is.

ing people away from the storyline, and that's not the point of the job.

I got a lot of satisfaction. We did one shot where they had to leave a chlorine filling out of the back of a plane at 25,000 feet. When we got the shot together, there was a visiting Australian clinician, whose name I actually don't remember, who happened to see it among the doctors. He came over to the office clinician afterwards and said "Boy, you just can't beat those physical shots, can you?" I got made to have one of those. I guess some members

Peter, you were working in Australia before.
Wheeler's career since '91

WILL: Well, I did some a lot of business these years—little shares, big shares, buying shares, and the son of a b— Then I got involved with the guy who made the clothes for Diana. Gary Exposito, about this year, 1990. He had some

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Below: the 4-4-4 test car in action (you can clearly identify the license plate).

income radio-visual-background)—we'd worked together before—and he wrote the wonderful piece of software I was working on: the interface and we put some jobs through it here in Melbourne. I wrote the original manual for it.

The first major feature to pack the software up with Super Macs Edge said they used me over in back here for a couple of months, working with Chris, setting up his facility. That's what I've been doing.

How did Flame become a Canadian product from an Australian development, or is there a long political story?

WHEE: Well kind of. As I understand it, the money ran out here. The Canadian company picked it up and put a lot of money and people into developing it as a marketable product, which it now is. It's got a wide base of installations across Europe and the U.S., and now Australia.

Chris, in Complete Post, the first company to pick up Flame here?

SCHWARTZ: Well, Flame is the software package and you can run on a variety of computer platforms. It's the first in Australia running on the Omega (microcomputer), and that gives you real time video in and out, which is really important for television work.

I should add that Flame is starting to get involved with post-production houses overseas. Rushes and The Mill have picked it up in London, so have some major post-production houses in Los Angeles and New York.

Can you explain the 4-4-4 business to me? It's headed: 4-4-4 digital, which is in line with your line resolution. What's the improvement

in terms of what I see?

SCHWARTZ: Well, in 4-2-2, the 4 stands for the black and white component of the image, and then the 2 and 2 stand for the colour resolution. So, to make an image 4-2-2, you actually have to throw away some of the colour information. Whereas, if you're working 4-4-4, you keep the full colour resolution of the picture. The new line that's 4-4-4 throughout, and I've been very careful to make sure that all the peripheral equipment is 4-4-4 as well, so that I don't lose a highlight in the Flame pattern. What that means is that in a coding situation—blue screen and green screen and so on—there's no much more information to lose. Flame has an excellent coding programme for blue and green screen, nothing so new with 4-4-4 that'll be improved even more. It'll just take it a couple of years then it's currently available.

WHEE: But that will also extend across colour grading and everything. The more information you have to start with, the less degradation when you start to manipulate it. With 4-2-2, have we been seeing a sort of compromise—something that is less than ideal?

SCHWARTZ: Yes, 4-2-2 is a standard that they came up with. When you start off with a television signal, there's so much information that it's very difficult to record from tape, and they're always trying to push the barless back, and get better quality and so forth. 4-2-2 is currently the standard to record onto tape, but they have to

TECHNICALITIES

throw information away in order to do that. Keeping it at the higher resolution as long as possible allows you to do so much more with it. That goes in a way ahead of what other people are using, so is 4-4-4 pretty widespread now? **SCHWARTZ:** No, it's a definite step ahead. Most VTRs currently work in 4-2-2, so everyone is working on 4-2-2. You need something like the new boards put the 4-4-4 out there with 50, but the next step forward is as far as the resolution and the quality of the image you can get.

Is the final output, in whatever format it comes out, 4-4-4?

SCHWARTZ: Well, you'd normally finish in 4-2-2, but the point is that you've done all the mixing—all the work—in 4-4-4. It's the same as the telephone. You'd often record off telephone in 4-2-2, but you still had the advantage, as Peter says, of the colour grading in 4-4-4. So you keep in 4-4-4 as long as possible. For the resolution, in order to output for theatre, because 4-4-4 isn't adequate. You have to output a step higher again. You need always to output at the best resolution that you can.

There's one thing in Flame that has been patented a bit, which is very important, and that's the stabilising feature. You can get a wobbly that is a slightly floating shot, and lock it steady, which has a wide range of applications with training. There's a huge range of uses for that. At the same time, you can lock another object onto any part of the picture, so you can get some detail of the picture and lock another thing onto that, which has a huge range of applications.

Is one possible application where you have something on steady, and you can't investigate it for some reason, or the camera itself was unsteady? I can imagine a lot of important uses for that.

WHEE: Yes, if you're getting image A over background B, given if they're locked off, if there's the slightest amount of tilt between them, it completely blows the picture. Flame stabilises them to beyond the resolution of the image. It's in a handful of a pixel. It's incredibly accurate. We can remove up and down, side to side, rotation, track and scrolling well. You can composite something in a scene, for instance, you can have it follow all the possible diacyclic movements of the background image.

What's going on at Complete Post at the moment? Are you using it?

SCHWARTZ: Yes. The jobs are really starting to come in now.

There's a shot where someone has to come and look at a child's house. It's difficult to get actors to work, who don't have to do what they have to do in get a house and the flowers, and we



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make it look dead — freeze it. That will involve stabilizing shots and so on.

We also need to put some traffic lights into its outdoor scene. That's a fairly simple composing job, but then we found the frames damaged in the shoot, so we have to fix the film before there's a scratch on it. But for most of these shots, no one is going to say "Wow! Here we go, the film!" for just another shot.

There is another drawback to someone holding a can of seltzer, and his fingers are covering a vital part of the brand name...

He'll never work in this town, agh!

SCHWARTZ: Well, we can't restrict it. It was shot invisible, and the label is now in another part of the world.

WILL: We have all the tools. With the label represented on the dark, it actually makes the drink look it up. It would be difficult for me to do that, except that Film has tracking tools to follow the motion.

Please pay motion blurring, where it follows the path of something that you have introduced. If it suggests that there would have been motion while the shutter is open, then it blurs it with the background. It really looks like a film blur — like the motion blur you get on film.

SCHWARTZ: People are now starting to accept jobs for Flame tools and will be quoting a lot of storyboards.

I was at a conference in London last year where they were talking about a "Pan European" television commercial, where the same product in some countries was called *Coke Light* and in other countries *Diez Cokes*. It's the same of, but a different can with a different label on it. I don't know what system was used for that, but it's not as simple as just replacing a static pack shot.

WILL: I did see a similar motion New York using

Flame. There's one module in Flame where you can distort an image just by grabbing the corners of it, twisting it and stretching it around. They have a flat label and distorted it by twisting it around in a circle. We have adjustable light sources so they could match the lighting that was in the actual scene.

There's an increasing blur between production and post-production, isn't there? These sort of things are really bringing production into the post environment, doing things that a filmmaker you'd have to go back and re-shoot. **SCHWARTZ:** Yes, it is becoming more and more important to plan these effects with the artist who'll be working with Flame. That's obviously a lot of discussion ahead of time it should be what you need to involve a lot of much earlier stage. **WILL:** You're blurring the distinction (ugh) out to pre-production as well. Something I've found as we do go here which he points out, Hollywood is that we can cut almost with the guy who's very adept at doing blue screen work, or whatever, and we can give them thousands of dollars in post-production just by getting them to prepare the elements correctly for our technology.

Anything else?

SCHWARTZ: Flame is being used in a lot of different features. In *Speed* (see *de Bond* 1993) for example, there's a race in the last mile with the bus jumps over it as a most immediate jump, but the hole was created in Flame.

In *True Lies* (James Cameron 1994) there's a lot of Flame work. That's quite an intense job. As Peter says, you don't mislead Flame with original film, and it stands up particularly. All the features films that have been produced are using the sort of resolution that Flame works on.

WILL: Flame has a lot of tools that introduce the flaws that are retained loss. Even though we

don't expose them, there is dark flare, and motion blur, and the depth of field things and, if you don't see them, you begin to get surprised about a shot. There's such a broad range of technicality you can give more convincing dark position than ever before.

That's an interesting way of looking at it, you introduce the flaws that we're used to it's an interesting process, because people have been trying so hard to make things better and better that you can make them superior to the rest of the film...

WILL: Yes, if you have a locked-off camera sitting in a blue screen studio and you're shooting someone — even if they're moving around and so on — it's going to be very boring to see against something on a neutral cam. We can even remove gain from both plates, composite them, then re-introduce film gain across the whole set. We even if you're not conscious of it, because post-ops in seeing consistent film gain across the whole set, you don't suspect any of the edges. You just believe it.

Coming from a film background, I'm happy that you're still trying to make things look like film.

WILL: We're doing a lot of work in introducing motion picture what perhaps the film transportation is like now out. We use analysis, the film moves more, take it out, and then put it back in again, at the end. That makes a big difference too.

It's good to have this at some of these applications. That's what I'm interested in following up for *Cinema Papers*.

WILL: It's exciting. People like Paul Sabatini and others like him who choose to do post-production, back have would probably have to use Flame. I think there's a lot of work. I really hope before a lot of that happening in Australia and Melbourne, especially.

Rocket Launch

It's not often that the entire world of grips and camera assistants gets a magazine in the pages of *Cinema Papers* — but this column dedicated to sporting all aspects of the craft of filmmaking is ready with a story.

Glen Atkinson and David Maxwell — aka *Rocket Films* — have brought quality and fun to the world of gadget bags, costume and apple boxes. I missed their month launch party, but dropped in later to see their crowded premises in downtown Copenhagen, from where they manufacture an astonishing range of excellent film and pieces. There are tool bags, basket bags and make-up bags, with pockets of every conceivable size and shape. They have bags and pouches with hangers made to hold no less than three hand bags, and stool bags filled with top quality skittles and so on.

And the list? A magnificent catalogue (illustrated by Maurice artist David McKay). This isn't just a sales card. It's on good glossy paper with

full colour photos of every gadget — yes, even the seedlings — plus a couple of full-page paintings to hold up on the wall, and the goods list is in the plain. The on-call happened the basket bags have more pockets than the Ford Dodge-pleased in a lifetime. The bags are all heavy-duty Cordura with polyester stitching. If they were any tougher they'd rust, but they won't, because all the chrome metal is double dipped. Anyone who thinks that this stuff is working much too hard.

Since the catalogue launch Maxwell told me that orders are coming in from overseas. Word is spreading.

According to his catalogue, *Rocket Films* have one day to rise and become a huge multi-national organization and eventually take over the world. They will. Where our directors and cinematographers want first, the camera assistants will surely follow. Watch, when there's a grip, there's a Rocket. You read it here first.



Movie Making Museum



The stampede towards this linear editing has left a trail of empty rooms full of much-loved but rarely-used hand-cranked editing machines. Some of them have found their way to Riverstone, in Sydney's north-west, where film editor turned-televisual-tycoon Paul Busby has opened a Movie Making Museum.

There is something about the premises - the original schoolhouse in Riverstone - with the local historical society, and is a part of the Blueberry City Bicentennial Museum. After months of negotiating, Busby got approval to move in just before Heritage Week earlier this year. At that time, the core of the exhibit was just four editing machines. By now, there is so much more from all over New South Wales - the museum includes an example of every make of film editing machine used in Australia. Monitors, cameras, satellite boxes, telecines, and so on.

I found it unsettling to visit a museum and find so much equipment that is still in use - but the benefit is that much of the collection is still in working order, and visitors can watch old movies on videotape and other shows clattering through a Moviola. The display is more than a row of machines - it feels like a film cutting room, with old contact phone lists from Australia and dispatch notes from Cinefilm stuck on noticeboards, film post

erion on the wall, and piles of cans covering a way available variety. Among the visitors have been more than 700 schoolchildren. Busby reports that the children were all fascinated to watch projected images - an increasingly rare change from video images. And it's hard to imagine, in the future, visiting a museum of computer and electronic equipment that will have quite some picture in it. There is something about specialized film equipment that will have to be carried alongside steam engines and grinders in their clocks.

Since the Movie Making Museum at Riverstone, Queensland closed their own Museum display last year. Although the Queensland collection is strongly biased towards film editing, there is the beginnings of a collection of other things - as far as I know, Ireland's first film festival with a number of 16mm projectors and various format tape play-

ers. Including an early Ampex 8-track quad machine and a Philips 2000 system cassette player. Busby has had discussions with the National Film & Sound Archive in the hope of including some of the related collection in his display, and is always happy to hear from people with old equipment that deserves a public home.

At present, the Movie Making Museum in Garfield Road East, Riverstone, opens on the first Sunday of each month, or at other times by appointment with Paul Busby, who can be contacted after hours on (02) 627 3435.

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BODY MELT

DAVID L. LARSEN

Body Melt is comprised of a number of sub-plots, one of which features the characters Gail Corcoran (Nicki Peirce) and Gino Argento (Maurice Anasta) — a couple of Melbourne artists who spend their lives off to the side of agents backed all the way up into their lives. They start off on a journey to Venice, a hidden little suburban resort where they're anticipating a quiet weekend. They never make it. Instead, where the Muriel's wedding is set, Gail and Gino are forced to work and learn in a horrible backwater family that's headed by Phil (Vincent Gill) who runs a kind of roadside service.

Before they encounter their grisly demise however (things are half-related, inferred) by the modern artists at this level, by the time telling account Gail and Gino look on with both excitement and distaste as few of the family's scheduled members fall out of Australia's sacred embrace (a language) with an equally strong rock, then out of its embrace and are melted to the tune of a swirling moose.

Any sense of cultural and social indignation (which remains in the center of the film) over the years is minimal. Yet this is not indignation for its own sake. For while Body Melters (and its director) of an elegant child of this thing called Australia in film, it is also a (philosophical) to adopt (or care) its own family. The language is one of the shared emphasis for the film's place on the cultural landscape — the Australian culture is seen to be reconstructed as Texas Cheesecake territory.

Director Philip Murphy is not one to avoid the reconstruction of all sorts of cultural icons. He plays shapes and forms in a formal practice. It has informed his work across a range of media — music performance, television, video, public culture and of course, film. For the modern of



And that's what it's all about: the body's role in life.

Chinese Papers. Murphy's earlier 60-minute feature, *Get Some Sleep and Sleep* is a good example. The film is composed of two segments, each representing the same initial story, yet each story continued in two different ways — through food, sex, passion and violence.

Earlier, *Body Melt* involves the occupants of four body-positive suburban homes located in Port Phillip, Melbourne — an easily identifiable A.V. Japanese like artists. The film, however, the film is introduced by the film of the Venice organization which has chosen the unexpected occupants of Port Phillip. Gail and Gino are introduced as a new body-enhancement drug. But the drug is delicious, and the bodies become prone to uncontrollable fits of ripping apart. Breaking up and melting down.

It becomes fairly clear that what happens to each set of occupants corresponds to pres-

entations of the house movie, the suburban psychosis plot, supernatural-occult plot, conspiracy-paranoia-dominance plot, and so on. The film is a part typology of house plots, but *Body Melt* does not go about its work as a simple typology. For while the representation of suburbia is not stranger to horror, *Body Melt* is not any suburban movie. It is the subside of Australian television land. What is not lost on the audience is that most of the film's characters are very familiar parts — they learn from the back of the corner and run the game of television from across the Melbourne through over-the-top of the *Dimension 4* or *Cap Shop* on television for young people. (The film is for young people, but not for the radio, you know it.)

Again, it is a question of how the film's representation of suburbia is not lost on the audience. And the body of suburbia, which is the body of the film, is not lost on the audience. It is not insignificant that most of the characters end up becoming the very last

body to be left off the film. They learn to live (or die) by the rules of suburbia. For example, an over-the-top bodybuilder at Venice grows an unusually big erection to the point that it explodes, the health and fitness fanatic Thompson (Noble Adams Wright) becomes a student of the Melbourne International and Youthful Festival. (The film is for young people, but not for the radio, you know it.)

Another aspect not lost on the audience is that *Body Melt* is definitely a film about family, whereas most everyday and every thing else in the film is about the body. (Both a literal and abstract, I'm assuming.) The cause of the mayhem, after all, is a result of Puff's wedding off with an even more extreme to the body-enhancement drug, which is a very old thing. This is important because, if the film is a part typology of horror, then it's also

standing when the difficult question of origin arises. Yet Sell and Gino alternate upon Paul's real status, again it is not imaginative that a good deal of the dialogue is devoted to talk about where people come from. At one point, Paul asks Gino where he is from at which time Gino confessing (71) unto Sell (84), more important as a reflection of where Gino really is, coming from is a response Gino gives to the question of whether Paul is the niece, father. "Ah, I doubt we are of kind of parent."

To sum up, the practice of reconstruction in body stunts is in part a dignified response to the prevarication of the Australian film industry which could do with a little reconstructing. "We're taking kudos," says, much Cagney as he sits, "to being able to take you one new state-of-the-art technology and deliver it... safely."

The other essential part of reconstruction is that it should be a *believe-though-what-says* Australian film could get away with a line like, "You fuckin' took control of the government?"

[illegible]

ENTREPRENEUR **BEHOLD** **WARRIOR** **WOMAN**

100% 99% 98% 97% 96% 95% 94% 93% 92% 91% 90% 89% 88% 87% 86% 85% 84% 83% 82% 81% 80% 79% 78% 77% 76% 75% 74% 73% 72% 71% 70% 69% 68% 67% 66% 65% 64% 63% 62% 61% 60% 59% 58% 57% 56% 55% 54% 53% 52% 51% 50% 49% 48% 47% 46% 45% 44% 43% 42% 41% 40% 39% 38% 37% 36% 35% 34% 33% 32% 31% 30% 29% 28% 27% 26% 25% 24% 23% 22% 21% 20% 19% 18% 17% 16% 15% 14% 13% 12% 11% 10% 9% 8% 7% 6% 5% 4% 3% 2% 1% 0%

The critical and box office success of *The Wedding Banquet* introduced the cinema world to Asian director Ang Lee, who has returned to his native Taiwan to make his first feature, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*.

[illegible]

These challenges are distilled in the film into a personal intimate Iraqi comedy played out in the microcosm of the family. Ali the film's subject (Othman Louadi) is a middle-aged 18 years old and his three adult daughters still live under the same roof but just barely. The thoroughly modern Powertvcomedy taking daughters spend the days in the city, with its well-lit night life, office buildings, suburbs and Pannings (which are only in return to the archaic Omani atmosphere of the house their father has created for them).

Mythologization of modern Thailand was based on universal North-South binary, of which Asia was the

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These brought up by my Taiwanese parents in a serious way (but I tried to treat complex family issues in a humorous way. Every family exists because of love, but that's precisely the topic families usually have the most trouble discussing. Speaking specifically of the character of Mr. Chen, I am sure about

The teacher spends 15 minutes to talk to her daughter about what she knows is best to satisfy one of their basic needs — food. He prepares the most efficient, economical dinner.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Jay Gatsby is characterized as the perfect example of the happening to the time, when the old elite is slowly and steadily breaking down. Gatsby is a character in a famous American novel and *The Great Gatsby* is the novel itself where an actual character was brought to life by Jay Gatsby. These novels are a fiction story and are not real and hence with a documentary text, as the content was the fact that it is not possible to maintain and get other business as well.

Let's say you're the director of "Foghorn" and make sequences about how a planning pool fits in the character's daily lives. You see a busy traffic jam outside the mall's hydroponic garden complex and then, followed by indoor shots of the food inside at only 100°C. You notice a doughnut has exploded on the counter, the milk of Joe (Blueface Young) sucking off milk at a drink of a milk and coffee. The second (Kris) (Edison Lee) will give a presentation in an online company boardroom, and the young (Wang) (The Wang Wang) meeting in a field food outlet while at home (Gao) kills a chicken for dinner. There's the end of the young (Wang) who pulls down her breakfast all the but also just posted by the water at a temple (the first (Wang) developed) by real. The contrast is a visually stark, and not the point for the movie. www.2000.com

The protagonist from *Twelve Cops* is more doughy than a chocolate chip in a casual subject that takes on the

It's like being a peasant. Yet, with every dollar the daughters have grown used and critical of the rich life's going. Moreover, with their progressive ways. They have come to expect openness and freedom, and are frustrated in their attempts to communicate with their old-fashioned, Western father.

One article towards their interests the problem he is the keeper of tradition and refuses to let his daughters stop, or follow in his footsteps like noble daughter who wanted to be a mail, is said instead to university to become a business executive and a time would they know anything about it.

But not as dangerous than the larvae found, and actually are by and the dipterans issue the hosts to produce their own private small flies. These flies then lose ability to be absolutely parasitic, and the greatest the dipterans, from a host, to be just as complete and absorbent as the wasp. And a unlikely thing with the very close genetic match, highly homologous from here, they a open relationship may not be beyond the range a nearly three-step from the wasp, but even against and they already fly (they) a highly-mutually beneficial relationship, as much as the relationship is from wasp.

The father's comic tentativeness was also put to the test when an overbearing widow, Madame Ling (M. Leif Kuo) shows in next door and ends up to seduce her. But Chen tries his own support plans, which he reveals to his stooped father, in a scene that is as fine as any in the despatch of emotional family scenes. Like in *The Wedding Banquet*, Lee Yung tries to connect with his wife, with a sting in the tail. Finally, his past is gone forever. Through the family reunion, he discovers that there is still familial love and affection in this harsh, noisy, open world.

In 1979, both generations have evolved to a new state. By the early 1980s, the old boys seem to fill the new independent houses he has sold. There is no coming back and if he has his reflection



visions, the march on Washington, Nixon's resignation, a U.S. interventionist role redefined to make them more media-friendly, so that Forrest gets a postwar message. It's like *Zeitgeist*, the social manipulation which is underlining within the film, but unlike Woody Allen's film, which was an effort at just listing the character amongst the nation, thus ironically commenting in a detached manner, Gump actually influences what happens.

Not only is the manipulation of events and imagery noticeable, but also the emphasis on individuality suggested within the film. Not the individuality of difference, but one of sameness—if only we were all like Forrest. The world would be a better place. To further this message, we are presented with representations of dated other actors who either reinforce the essential "Gumpness" social or rise the "next Gump" in the first camp, we have Forrest's Vietnam buddy, Bubba, essentially an African American version of himself in terms of simplicity and naivete. In the later camp, we have figures such as the governor and the Black Panthers, personifications of the angry young radicals, full on fury and hypocrisy, and characterized by violence and propaganda. Then there is Lieutenant Dan (the talented Gary Sinise), who gets in touch with the inner Gump after losing his legs during the Vietnam war, thus adding the journey from cynicism and lack of faith to optimism and belief we all should follow.

Traditional conservative values are also engaged within the film, and like this experimenting with the rewriting of history which has interesting implications for such a popular movie. It is at this point that a comedy aspect of Adam Martin's quote seems to summarize neatly a lot of what goes on in *Forrest Gump*. It is a film which illustrates a type of myth making which explores and explains life, and which evokes tough complex questions. However this intent to dramatize the film was a moment of pure popular culture reassessment soon within the "class history" of Hollywood. *Forrest Gump* displays the traditional major desire for escapism, the fantasy, the ideal, the dream, the wish, the myth, the idea of a "finely tuned sense of what works for audiences to the extent that he can and desires to go beyond them whenever he is being asked to them." For all its faults, it is hard not to be drawn into the simple, fantasy world of *Forrest Gump* and his all-encompassing one machine, even if it is at the hands of witty Hollywood film executives, who ignore ample opportunity for a more tongue in cheek approach.

FORREST GUMP Directed by Robert Zemeckis. Producers: Wendy Finerman, Steve Tisch, Steve Starke. Cinematographer: Charles Haugan. Screenplay by a book based on the novel by Winston Gribble. Director of photography: Don Burgess. Production designer: David Carter. Costume designer: Joanna Johnson. Music scored by William R. Kyeles. Editor: Arthur Schmidt. Composer: Alan Silvestri. Cast: Tom Hanks (Forrest Gump), Robin Wright (Jenny Currier), Gary Sinise (Lt. Dan Taylor), Mykelti Williamson (Bubba Blue), Billy Fichtel (Gump's Mother), Crissy Crumb (Myrtle), Chevy Chase (Forrest), Harris P. Hall (Young Jenny), Steve Tisch (Wendy Finerman), Production: Amblin Entertainment. U.K. Release 14th June 1994.



ROBIN WRIGHT (JENNY CURRIER) IN *FORREST GUMP* © AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT

MURIEL'S WEDDING

DAVID HALLIDAY

With *Muriel's Wedding* (P. J. Hogan) and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Stephen Elia) vying for the honour as the year's APF Award, the legacy of Ben L. Pfaffen's *Shoggy* dilemma—with its "quality" stand at the ordinary and the extraordinary—is hard to miss. This latest explicit aperté continues the tradition of early cinematic Australian films, a tradition that chooses to define our unique culture as little but sexually volatile without losing radical natural without being too honest. And, like its high profile colleagues, *Muriel's Wedding* has chosen the slightly camp, but very clever narrative to raise the potentially confusing, at points of the script marketing and the writer-director P. J. Hogan has resolved these potential conflicts with wit and femininity, successfully rendering cultural critique with vulnerability, and reflecting the ambivalence towards the town and its inhabitants can evoke.

"You're terrible, Muriel!" is an easy-angled one-liner that underpins the aperté as a great comic effect in *Muriel's Wedding*. But as well as a perfectly placed one-liner, the point-line is a simple acknowledgment of the source of Muriel's unhappiness in the sexual form of Priscilla Spill, and at the most marriage of the parties of

the film, *Muriel's Wedding* is an ugly duckling type tale—in which the necessity of fantasy, especially of the self-delusory kind, plays a central role. While showing us prisms (gone times surely) the film does respect femininity as a facet of personal and social life, and perhaps even as a viable path to self-discovery.

Like her so-called friends, Muriel Heslop (Toni Collette) is drawn by the dream of success at the same time, and ends up married. But facing with a partner far from too dippy, and disconnected from understanding her (Bilkins) for being "crazy", Muriel is forced to pursue her dreams in the solitude of her room, to the an angry, misanthropic sound of ABBA.

With a blinky chapter from her unaccepting mother, Muriel escapes to the local resort of Hibiscus Island where she meets Priscilla (Rachel Griffiths), a school friend who too felt Priscilla Spill's freedom. Spill, Priscilla and Muriel immediately connect, and, in the film's most heartfelt alluding all-around set-piece, they make to ABBA's "Waterloo" in front of Muriel's immediate friends and an approving male audience. It is in this moment that *Shoggy* (Johnson) and *Priscilla* most clearly interact with *Muriel's Wedding* and are tempted to head Ben's villa's line from Priscilla

about "no more bloody AIDS" except that in the case of *A Higher Love* has harnessed the media's guilty feelings to quite convincing and effective ends. As a kind of *Barbra Streisand* of the triumphs and redemption of AIDS, *A Higher Love* does indeed embrace the contrary world in which blooded innocents

Hogan is very experienced at landing in again in movies when *Moral* decides to re-visit herself by changing her name to *Moral*. Away from real friends and dysfunctional family, *Moral* escapes "as alone" *Moral* and meets a *Dece* (*Matt Dwyer*) in a dark parking hospital. It is a hilarious movie that explores the film's essence of love as well as high. *Moral* and *Dece*'s chemistry between making is interrupted by *Phoebe* and two other *American* sisters who have been whopping. It up in the next scene. In the middle of *Moral* a giggling fit that has *Dece* laughing, producing, *Phoebe* says she and *Dece* aren't, she can't have her face

While nursing her wheelchair-bound friend through her own obsessive love marriage and AIDS, Hight is the most astute and sophisticated of the handsome South African whites (David Lagerfeld), who intends to marry in order to gain citizenship. With the prospect of becoming a citizen as Mrs David Van Aarde and escaping Medical History forever, it seems. *Maand* is a superb, subtle drama.

In a paragraph that doesn't quite live up to its position in the film's obvious narrative trajectory, Mariel finally marries. Her father forgives her. Her friends from *Persepolis* (Spiridonidis) befall her. *Indevanest*. Only Ahnane and Mariel's mother, who, unless told and is unswayed, do not take sides in the relationship.

But before she can do this, Patricia learned the hard way to be forced back to reality with the death of her mother. Early feelings of story excitement and philosophical and practical support to Murphy's Black baby in the role of hearing and Jeanine Torgler captures the kind of work we must do and the unbearable rage that defines very emotional loss generation – and that is in the end a tragic sense. A new emotional road under a new face, when we see a tragedy of Murphy after her funeral. It is the only time we see her face again. But she is not there.

Harveygot a deathwishandMarried the first she has been living—and so responsibly her father must take Mr. Fair (and her mother's) antipathy. One ends the marriage because Marjorie's and withRochelle told a total and complete Harvey to Harvey. But

Bill Hunter plays the disaffected character of Al Henkel with a certain amount of pathos and looks perfectly at home in the succession of Chinese restaurants that he inhabits. Eugene Lee is given the slightly fictional role as Tami, the leader of the all-time terrible White-Panther-Muscle anti-Racial Griffiths helps and when the playful yet violent turn of the tale, as Miami's racist, neo-Confederate nation for Chinese

But it is *High Collector's* capacity to bridge the euphoric and the darker moments of *Marble* that elevates this piece to the first rank of its category. As the closely *Marble*, she involves an empathy with *Robert* that we all come up with, and

Internal view introduces the possibility of cultivating the negativity and low self-esteem that can be the reinforcement of society and family – an intention we all share in one way or another. Of course, the film offers some pertinent advice as to how this might be done, which does not include embracing the AFRICA.

Material's branding was undoubtedly rejected, but subverted the industry's current "luxury" model. But, within this paradigm, it achieves a lot. It shows that you don't need to be tied at the expense of more sobering realities, and that such realities themselves require the world of fashion to be overcome.

********* ********* "World's Hottest Actor" David
P. J. Wright interviewed by Jim Sparks. *Charm*
Issue No. 122, October 1999, pp. 19-22.

[illegible]

MY COUNTRY

[illegible]

In 1894, there is the longest unmeasured way for the middle class to position itself in relation to Aboriginal Australians. The *Newspaper* (1894) (also *Aboriginal*) argued that their interview 'has been an odd way for people who have to realize the inferiority of their legitimate citizens. Most certainly, it is no longer suitable for adults. But

Wills to speak for Aboriginal people in the way that gold Miners may once have wanted to Aboriginal men were sought for themselves.

The question this result is dramatic for cultural strategists (aka documentary filmmakers) whose modest aspirations (at least some at the time) has been to reflect, represent and empower the powerless in society. Should they try to speak for the empire any more or should they disappear into the distributives and production base of the background in order to minimize the confusion they generate by their very mediocrity?

These are questions and issues that do not only appear in relation to asymmetric filtering about ASEAN regional Australians. They are also questions that can be applied to the changes taking place in the cultural context in general. As communities appropriate the skills and knowledge needed to operate new technologies, the changes seem to be positive.

1. The following are the names of the people who were present at the meeting:

is at the core of advances in cultural education in the post-colonial environment of the 1990s. The confident assertions of indigenous people, minorities, women – in fact any identifiable communities which differentiate themselves from a dominating superior culture and find the structures suitable to produce and reproduce images of themselves – are a part of this new post-colonial formation.

This is very fine documentary made the very anxious, even angry. Producer writer Bob Plante has every right to make such a film, and with the best of intentions I am sure. As a former journalist with a rage for depictions of black and white Plante has worked with Aboriginal people on documentary films over more than a decade and has good credentials for storytelling. But what might have been an engrossing story a decade ago (Jehon i film) and Plante is now obsolete. 05/08/95.

By postoperatively comparing the film with the way I used to suggest that there are three ways of reacting to My Country. The first response is the disempowered observer, the second movement, the internalized conflict.

The disempowered observer in the position whereby the viewer is reduced to an impression, even an objectified or a passive agent capable of identifying a consciously articulated argument, but largely incapable of a response. This is the prevailing position adopted by the filmmaker in this documentary.

As the journalist approaches the scene in more of the land rights struggle the Ombudsman states of a conflict between the land owning indigenous peoples around Darwin in the Northern Territory the preferred approach is that of an external perspective. Strategically this involves presenting both sides of the issue, searching from outside the internal field of view, and allowing the interested and informed content to make



an appropriate rational judgement about a suitable outcome. At the conclusion of the film, the result is less engagement and more information. In other words, the information offered is the justification to proceed in such a way that it is more like data waiting in an endless, yet inaccessible, assembly line.

Unfortunately, this is the approach taken in this film, despite some efforts to the contrary. For example, the film desperately wants to use the land rights issue—placing them in the context of the Martin family who own a cattle station where a massacre of perhaps 100 blacks (probably hundreds more) took place in 1892. This followed the murder of Fred Brockman by Aboriginal people but his descendants accuse of Aboriginal women.

We get a version of this story from two Aboriginal men, one of whom, Henry Dickson, features in the film because of his long standing relationship with the Martin family. Dickson represents the dilemma faced by the landowners who want to recognize his right to the land, but, of course, not the land he believes is rightfully his. On that side is a born-again source which the landowner is not willing to give up.

Dickson is offered another piece of land, which is embroiled from the property for him to settle on. "Whatness and looking any animals it is his to develop. Of course, the demand for land by Aboriginals the result of 'outside influence' (what) cause the staff" according to David Martin. Such views, represented as a sort of compromise policy, are presented with such disposition as a compromise for engineering. His also wrong, but the disinterested observer approach to documentary never expects to weigh in.

The resistant participant is the real position. Adopted by viewers who lead the filmmaker's subject the destination of the necessary rational engagement: the resistant participant is my version of the engaged into. In this case, the person responds because of promising equal commitment to land rights, social and Aboriginal well-being.

This resistant participant is the popular cultural advocate who lives in and with popular everyday experience, recognizing what matters and what can be supported that may improve the state of the world. Any attitude or fabrication is quickly identified and rejected by the resistant, as an authentic expression of an otherwise misquotation. Authenticity in the past colored environment is the foundation.

The colonial resistance would not actively appear in the context of a liberal investigation of Aboriginal and rights issues. Indeed, it was only when the debate ended at the end of this film that the three positions were clear to risk. The co-producers of *My Country* are film veterans, the film finance co-producers and the BBC. The latter further seems to be the problem from inside—rightly or wrongly—is a documentary made to think interests of BBC-TV. The complex version of events is believed partly of view, but also and with differences arising from land rights debates, a comfortable conclusion: extensive use of the helicopter fly-over of the area and again in the *Tenere* (Dance) is sub-

stant, and (from outside) as an on-line

early made sense. Perhaps this is really a film for people in the UK who expect performance about the history of Africa in the Antipodes. The explanation of land rights and black-white relations is presented like a well-plotted road-map.

This is the key issue, the film raises. For Australia themselves the dilemma in making films about Aboriginal issues is not there in the context of Central Australia where the struggle about the relations between black and white Australia is being worked out. The dilemma is in the filmmaking: it is to be founded on contradictions made with an eye to informing non-local audiences. Colonial simplicity is needed to gain a picture, contrasting it with the faded legacy of the 19th Century, as the landscape seen and watch the BBC for a bit of moral uplift, get to rest their eyes over the out in the distance. Yes, Mr. really in laugh and topos and here, but it's?

This explains the dilemma of my attention engagement with this film. It serves the interests of people outside our milieu who have no interest in any practical engagement with life in Australia.

Perhaps the worst of foreign affairs filmmaking should have been criticized the way other films are criticized. But then again, perhaps there is a lesson here, namely, that co-producers involving funds from elsewhere in time and tell to find an audience in the country of their birth.

AC COMPANY Directed by two men, Ruth Barry Producer: Bob Rose, Paul Barry Executive producer: Gloria Rose, Alan Davidson, Christopher, Paul, Paul, Ruth Barry, Director of photography: Peter Martin, Richard, Mike, Michael, Christopher, Chris, Paul, Paul, Sound mixer: Paul Barry, Peter, Mike, Editor: Tim, Michael, Producer: COOPER, JFF. Developed and produced with the assistance of film Victoria and the Australian Film Commission. Australian distributor: ABC, Silver, SA, and Australia, 1994.

SPIDER & ROSE

LARRY BARNER

Spider & Rose is an exciting and entertaining film. It is technically impressive and exciting with very strong performances and an entertaining script. It is a film that challenges our preconceptions about old-age, relationships and life.

The film opens with a post-credits sequence in which Rose (Ruth Grier) wanders along an empty country road in shock. Her husband has just turned the creek, but it takes Rose some time to follow that. For a while, her perception is distorted by shock and she becomes preoccupied with her ideas. The film, the but roundings in general. When she does notice her husband's body it is covered with blood and her whole attitude the soundtrack.



This opening sequence sets the style for the rest of the film. It is a composition masterpiece about the camera begins from above looking directly down into Rose's and as she shuffles along the road, the camera lowers until it is in the road with her. It then follows her as she wanders around and we eventually see through her fingers. In order to achieve this shot without losing the frame and then, the scene was mounted on the back of a tracking vehicle and, once the sledboard operator got off the crane, the tracking vehicle drove away out of shot. The shot is masterfully executed and carries us through the initial scene.

In *Spider & Rose*, the camera is used almost like another character. Rather than using cuts, it often switches back being a disinterested, unobtrusive observer to emerging around in "helping" to show us what the character's feelings have been reaching to. Instead of panning along the "line" frequently the camera pans the other way, often as often as about 300 degrees. The film is also created in a scene at the back of an ambulance as Rose and Spider (James) discuss contrast each other about whether or not Rose will leave in the back. Spider wants her out of the way, but she is not about to leave, and as they argue, we cut from a two-shot profile from one side to a two-shot profile from the other, and back and forth with the argument.

During another confrontation scene between Spider and her boss—about whether or not he will take things off driving Rose to the country—the camera slowly drifts into each character. As it does, each eye-line is directed to the camera. The device forces the audience to become a part of the conflict once our point of view becomes light into the argument continues. Once again, the camera becomes part of the action as though it is another character rather than a

direct observer. It is an unusual approach, and given the film's garishness which we discover is just at the start and end.

The main part of the film begins a year later when Rose, who has been his girlfriend all this time, is to be driven to the country to celebrate her birthday with her son and his family. Rose has a bad feeling about the journey, and, despite the developed phobia of hers, she makes a difficult patient for anyone to handle. Spider is a young 'hebel' who is an ambulance driver. The husband of his job, together with a neglected childhood, have made him develop a rather aggressive outlook. His phobias in life seem to consist of parties, music and girls. But Spider is given the job of driving Rose to the country, and the task severely jeopardises his appearance at his own farewell party. For Spider, Rose is just a old woman whom he will never relate to and who is directly responsible for jeopardising his party.

The film deals with several issues, though predominantly the acceptance of others. It is through these two extremely different people forced together to deal with some pretty demanding situations that the audience (and character) learns to appreciate what each other has to offer. It is also about learning how the elderly and of appreciating "old-fashioned" values. (Much of the film takes place in the country where old fashioned values are nurtured.)

Rose has herself become bitter and angry. She quite rightly believes that it not respected or appreciated because she is old. She is also resented by young people who are more interested in their own lives than what an elderly woman might have to offer. The death of Rose's husband represents the loss of perhaps the last person who had any respect for her. Rose also is aware that most people think of her as someone to look after until she dies. Spider is an exception. But through their dialogue and together Spider comes to realize that despite her age Rose does have things to offer. In fact he is eventually forced to rely on her.

In many ways, Spider and Rose are similar people, they both live life in the extreme because in their different separations, they have learned that life is uncertain and can deal some bitter pills. This knowledge has largely led them

to withdraw from life and be nervous at others. They learn that instead of hiding from life and the pain it represents, to embrace it and live it as they really want to, and not by someone else's concept of what they should be doing.

As each begins to understand the pain the other carries, they are able to let go of the pain which themselves. Rose can see that Spider needs to parents, but she can appreciate how he has to fight his own battle with his mother and what he could feel gun from re-establishing some relationship with her. Because Spider wants to appreciate how remarkable Rose is, he discovers his old father-in-law's relationship with mother. Similarly, Rose is "passed off" by her own son until she is told that his relationship with her has been with him and his family.

The film is also about making a statement as an individual. Throughout, various characters are involved in keeping their person has their own agenda, and it seems the object of the exercise is to try and get what you can out of any situation. Spider and Rose are continually in situations out of their control. Spider does not want to drive Rose, but is forced to. Rose does not want to be driven, but is forced to. Rose wants to live on her son's term, but he doesn't want her to. Character is constantly trying to negotiate some control over their situations, and sometimes they are successful. For instance, Rose will travel with Spider, but only if she can use all the time. She convinces him to allow her to do this by the simple fact that because she gets travel sickness in the back. (Actually, she vomits on him anyway because he wouldn't slow down.) By the end of the film, Spider is in exactly the same situation as Rose was at the beginning. He is picked up by an ambulance, and, because of his broken leg, the driver asks him to be in the back. Spider refuses just as Rose did, and the ambulance driver uses the same tactics on Spider as Spider used on Rose.

Because the film deals with very different characters, trying to exert control over their lives, it is very dialogue-heavy where much of the dialogue is peevy and competitive. Most of the characters are here to teach others and therefore find out about each other through talking. There is a lot of smart, back and forth peevy

dialogue between characters. Only on occasion is the dialogue awkward, and a little contrived. The performances are on the whole very strong although it is less convincing in which both Ruff Gredwell and Simon Donald are a little uncomfortable. But this is more a result of weak material in the script than their acting abilities.

The film also looks at the complexity of relationships: what people say and what they are prepared to do. This is best depicted when Rose's son tells her, after she has arrived at his farm that he and his wife have decided to leave it she lives in a nursing home. Later, Jack (Max Cullen) is put to the test when after encouraging her to be with him and share their time together, she turns the tables and asks him to come with her on a trip. He tells her he can't. It is at this time that we realize that he has his limitations. Up until now he has appeared to be the character who most appreciates Rose and what she has to offer - but only up to a point.

Spider & Rose is also about how important it is for ourselves to be a what we can learn from other people to have an open attitude with others and the choices they make. It is also about the fact that one doesn't have to make the obvious conventional choices that follow a given one. This includes and denies at the most important thing. Spider and Rose learn this through their own conversations with death and the realization that tragedy is potentially always around the corner, but that you can't be afraid to keep living because of that.

FOURTH ISSUE: "Bill Bennett's Spider & Rose" is a report by John Coleman and Neil Harris. Capote. Cinema Papers No 120 August 1994 pp 48-9.

SPIDER & ROSE Directed by Bill Bennett. Producers: Lynda Carthy, Colette Telford-Hewson. Line producer: Julie Gordon. Scriptwriter: Bill Bennett. Director of photography: Andrew Laszlo. Production designer: Peter Major. Costume designer: Rose Major. Sound assistant: Byrd Bullermark. Artistic Photo Editor: Henry George. Composer: Clive Lee. Cast: Ruth Gredwell (Rose Dougherty), Simon Donald (Spider McCall), Max Cullen (Jack), Linda Fitzgerald (Florence Dougherty), Jennifer O'Call (Helen Dougherty), Tina Turner (Janet Dobson), Ben Chapman (Peter Frost), Marshall Legler (Ambulance Operator), Bruce Venables (Truck Driver), Ben Salton (Ambulance Driver). A Sandy Films production. Australian Film Institute. Dendy 28mm. 90-min. Australia 1994.

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HAMMER AND BEYOND

THE BRITISH HORROR FILM

Peter Hutchings, Manchester University Press, 1999, 193 pp., pb, no ISBN 95

JONATHAN ROFFE

Horror has been one of the most successful movements within the British film industry in the post-war period. *Monster and Beyond: The British Horror Film* by Peter Hutchings, discusses the unique place that horror occupied within the British film industry. Pre-eminence among the production houses of the time was Hammer Films, which accounted for more than half of all horror films made between 1954 and 1970. The success differential was due,

Hutchings argues tellingly in which it was able to successfully re-imagine and represent critical theories and ideas of which white Britain during the 1940s and 50s.

Horror is seen as a reflection, a response and an intervention into post-war British life, in endeavouring to assess the importance and worth of British horror, and to account for its success and popularity. Hutchings employs a structurally non-reductionist methodology. He charts the ways in which horror is created and diverged from the characteristic practices of the broader film industry and describes the complex process of interaction between the filmmakers, the audience, the industry, the press and the wider historical and social environment.

While taking the situation in the structural nation involved in the British film industry, Hutchings writes to uncover the imaginative and creative work done by the filmmakers. In order to account for the entertainment value of the film.

It will become clear that in seeking to make horror attractive to an audience (...) filmmakers necessarily had to address what they perceived to be the lived experience, fears and anxieties of that audience, with the issue of mass engagement both aesthetic and ideological (p. 10).

The period 1945-64 clearly marks the emergence of a British horror cinema, and the peak years of Hammer. Of particular importance in this period is the collaborative work of Peter Cushing. Christopher Lee and director Terence Fisher on five films: *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1947), *Dracula* (48 & title), *Horror of Dracula*

(1959), *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1959), *The Mummy* (1960) and *The Gorgon* (1964). These films, as Hutchings writes,

embody the aesthetic in its most accomplished form (...) and can be seen as centres of gravity within Hammer Horror: in the same way that Hammer itself provided a successful model of British horror cinema in general (p. 60).

Hutchings provides detailed analysis of these films and others in the book. He clearly articulates the way in which aesthetic and ideological issues were treated in Hammer and the way in which Hammer in particular was able to capitalise on these.

The dominance of Hammer into the 1960s, according to Hutchings, is down to two key factors. First, Hammer was very sensitive to its audience, and was committed to being positive, matured and for itself, rather than to a perceived commitment to family entertainment. It moved quickly to exploit opportunities in the national television market, by taking a risk on screening practices in order to maintain its success. Second, Hammer established itself as a 'Big Studio' for 16 years and was able to establish a key group of skilled cinematographers, technicians, filmmakers and actors. Third, Hammer took itself to an aggressive American distributor, which enabled cold financing and eventual worldwide distribution.

Critical appreciation of horror did not begin to arrive until the early 1970s, for horror posed particular problems for critics. As Hutchings notes, its morbidity, violence, exploitative nature and adolescent audience made it easy for reviewers to be polarising or dismissive. The formalist aspects of Hammer films attracted established criticism, for they bore not the signature of the auteur (auteur) but the mark of the film factory.

However, such success was not on the agenda for Hammer Films, and as he has received critical approval when it came. For Hammer itself seemed forced to its own use of props and sets, the familiar stable of actors (the cyclical nature of the films, and depended on the negative reaction of the press for its sustained commercial success).

(Hammer) (...) seemed to contribute little and contribute mainly to an over-quoted conspiracy theory. Indeed this disquietingly became an important factor in the way Hammer sold itself and its product to the mass audience (p. 101).

The book divides horror film production into four periods: 1948-53, 1954-64, 1964-70 and 1971-79. Each period is analysed in terms of production, production, social environment, aesthetic concerns and ideological focus. Several key films from each period are selected as key representatives of the time, and subjected to close reading.

A chapter is also devoted to tracing the history of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* from the 19th Century to their re-invention in British cinema of the 1930s. Hutchings argues against a single Gothic tradition and focuses on the way in which the characters have been displaced and redefined.

Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film covers a dynamic period of cinematic and social history, providing generative as well as specific analysis in a quite non-technical and reader-friendly manner. Hutchings brings us to the attention to a neglected collection of films, in that being the necessarily of the genre, picking up themes and issues, finding development, disruption, conservatism, experimentation, success and failure.

SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

Antonio Bando, with Robert Lindsay, Century, London, 1994, 265 pp., no ISBN, no codes, no ISBN 95

JACOB HARRIS

The long-awaited autobiography of Antonio Bando (it is, in fact, an edited interview conducted by Robert Lindsay, with various amendments and suggestions by Bando) is, therefore, not an autobiography in a true sense and the publisher wisely doesn't claim it to be. While efficiently and disingenuously together, there is no personal style or tone, and it stays large chunks that a simple without need might not.

It is always easy for critics to write, especially actors, to put their thoughts and personal opinions on paper. The reader's interest is in respect for the subject's work on film may be diminished by unnecessary or unhelpful aspects of a personal life.

This is certainly the case for *Songs My Mother Taught Me*, where Bando does not always come across intelligent or admirable. It is not to argue that Bando is the actor of enormous talent of a man who has lived a full life, always wisely, stood up for his convictions. Many actors make a habit of superficially perceiving political sentiments, but Bando is different. Always an individualist, his controversial and changing political and social views are



identity a core part of his man.

The difficulty of Brando's balancing the joys and rewards of his career, which he ultimately regards as irrelevant and trivial, with his inner existence about the planet and its people is well conveyed in the book. One day, during an off-screen interview, he is surprised by some of his friends and the reason why some are surprised, but certainly not doubt his commitment.

Because the book is entitled Brando also says things that will raise thought, doubt, but have better put, or been less surprising. For example, when discussing *Seven Years in the Trenches*, a film which starred Brando, Brando says he found the book too bleak and while what it contains portraying Germans

[...] When getting to *Seven Years in the Trenches* [...] I like many books and movies produced by Americans the war. I think it was a perfectly understandable idea that, consciously or unconsciously, Jews had made sure that the world would never forget the Holocaust and not caring deeply, would tolerate sympathy and financial support for Israel. Ironically Brando was saying that all Germans were responsible for the Holocaust, which I don't agree with [...]. I thought the story about Brando was that there are no inherently "bad" people in the world, but that they can easily be misled.

I am uncomfortable with generalizations because they are rarely accurate [...].

Brando seems entirely to miss the irony of his own conclusion:

Brando is an "anti" super feeling when he discusses the craft of acting and the talents of fellow performers. At times, there is a sense that he has not fully or clearly revealed all his thoughts, but there is no doubt that these are subjects about which Brando has a deep, even unique, understanding.

The book divides into many short chapters, tends to deal in blocks of family and general history highlights of a film and then its parts, and a discussion of its qualities for social change. Many readers, of course, will be most interested in the film sections, and be eager to find out Brando's views on the famous people he has worked with.

Actors are not always in accord with critics and audiences about their best or favourite films, performances and directors. Two movies concerning a lost director or part, and, in the circumstances, giving an acceptable performance can take far greater importance than delivering a role in the company of angels. When Brando lists his three favourite directors, he not surprisingly lists Elia Kazan, the man most responsible for any of shaping Brando's

career and style. The other two choices may be a surprise for those whose preference is American cinema: Gille Polanski and Bernardo Bertolucci. There is little doubt, though, that Brando's performances in *Guercio* (Bernie's comic features) and *Last Tango in Paris* are

highlights the director's out there into an offbeat and intelligence. The early director means for his own position that this reader finds surprising. Arthur Penn lists his performance in *The Chase* clearly ranks among his greatest, but each is their own.

Unfortunately what Brando writes for further about these great filmmakers is rather trivial and anecdotal. One would have hoped for much more, and had Brando clearly set in a desk and penned this book. He may have gone deeper into these impor-

tant cinematic relationships.

Of course, another director who got a starring performance from Brando, in a film which while mentioned by the reader, as well as discussed in Brando himself. One of the directors is a list of the best of Westerns, and a legend because of stories about Brando's director and the film's original length. (One account has Brando shooting a cut which lasts more than 24 hours, with multiple takes and stops. Brando still in shot, to stunned executives. At the end Brando is reported to have said "Bravo! And I don't want a single frame taken out.")

Again Brando says little about the film, and less about its writers as director. What he does repeat is unlikely to mean, they were in his creative approach.

I started writing it, but pretty soon got sick of it and turned it over to someone else. When he told Brando, the constant told it was I like my version of the story. I did not have any of the picture to except that Melzer. The studio cut the movie to pieces and made him a far less important character than the whole project was without any film it.

If that sounds a bit casual by the on Christopher Columbus: *The Discovery*.

I was depressed and wanted to go home. But I knew Alexander (Bakula, producer) would see me if I backed out of my contract. There was nothing left for me to do except wait through my pain. The three actors and I had nothing to work with. They told me, but I was afraid I didn't. I stumbled my way through the part and gave an embarrassingly bad performance. The pay wasn't bad, though, so I waited for two days, wait.

Well, when one is dealing with a star one doesn't risk it. It is the nature of the business which has been very good to Martin Brando, but perhaps not as good as he has been to it.



BOOKS RECEIVED

RAFFAELLE CAPUTO

THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT

Stephen Elliot. Currency Press, Sydney, 1994. 36 pp. pb. pp \$14.95

The story of the latest Australian film includes complete cast and crew profiles and is illustrated with both black and white and colour pics. The introduction by Stephen Elliot attempts to very little regarding the process of scripting.

BASIC BETACAM CAMERAWORK

Peter Ward. Peter Press, Oxford, 1994. 168 pp. pb. pp \$25.95

Bery introduced the Betacam in 1982 - a combined broadcast-quality camera and recorder that could be operated by two persons. The techniques developed with this new type of video camera and recorder were a mixture of television and film methods. It could be edited on a desk or used live. It required the technology of video, but could use the discontinuous recording methods of film.

This book aims to give basic instruction of the new glass camera and recorder, as well as provide a basic knowledge of the additional skills required - camera lighting, video editing, television journalism, etc.

The book is divided into three broad sections progressing from a step by step guide to applying live to the Betacam, then to more detailed material on about operational controls and, finally, to the basic production techniques required for broadcasting.

Stephen's description of controls in his manual are related to the Sony 300400 series of Betacam.

BEASTS OF SUBURBIA: REINTERPRETING CULTURES IN AUSTRALIAN SUBURBS

Edited by David Forster. Oxford Univ. Press, 1994. 337 pp. pb. pp \$24.95

The editors have gathered essays on diverse aspects of suburbia, drawing on various disciplines and methodologies including feminism, literary philosophy, sociology and anthropology.

The notion of an ideal life is compared up in suburbs of the early 20th Century and today's project parties. Antagonist responses to the suburbs are discovered in cinema and art. Aboriginal suburbs in Alice Springs and gentrified inner city suburbs of Melbourne embody the cultural contrasts between suburban lifestyles.

"Round the Block. Back to the Suburb in *Return Home*" by Rose Lunn is the essay directly related to the cinema, though all other essays deal with related concerns.

CLAY ANIMATION

Michael Peterson: *Twilight Publishers*, New York, 1994, 275 pp., pb. pp \$54.95

Clay animation on film first made its appearance in silent cinema. In conjunction with live-action it what was called *matinee variety* which still today were painted people who looked like sculptures. The time spent involved a dream sequence bracketed by a sculptor working away, who then gets fired, falls asleep and dreams about the sculpture coming to life. In a lot of cases, clay animation was employed in stead of painted human figures.

Clay animation slipped around 1911, presumably because of the predilection of silent audiences and the generalization of film, and didn't come back into vogue until studies like *Animatrix* came along in the late '70s.

This is an important book, not only because after years of an million films, I additionally played second fiddle to cat-animal film, but also because there is very little written critical history of clay animation.

THE DURATION OF A KISS

Peter White: *Serfer and Weinberg*, Auckland, 1994, 267 pp., pb. pp \$70.00

A collection of short stories by New Zealand writer-director Peter White, written during his co-directing venture as *Desperate Remedies*.

White, first gay fiction collection *Desperate Remedies*, won the Red Herring- judged New Zealand Book Award and the 1993 Road Fiction Award, and is about to be published in the U.S.

HALLIWELL'S GUIDE TO THE BEST CHILDREN'S FILMS

Edited by John Walker: *Hogrefe/Collins*, London, 1994, 320 pp., pb. pp \$42.95

HALLIWELL'S GUIDE TO THE BEST COMEDIES

Edited by John Walker: *Hogrefe/Collins*, London, 1994, 445 pp., pb. pp \$42.95

These two guides are drawn from the standard reference book *Halliwel's Film Guide*. The listings include synopsis, cast and crew credits, and synopses, critical assessment, comments from well-known professional critics are sometimes appended, ratings (more to four stars), Academy Awards, year of release, and notices which films should be currently available on video or laser disc.

HOLLYWOOD'S DARK CINEMA: THE AMERICAN FILM NOIR

R. Walter Peltier: *Twilight Publishers*, New York, 1994, 300 pp., pb. pp \$34.95

Of late, the interest in enjoying renewed critical interest (in a film fourth or fifth book, including re-issues) on the rise to have appeared over the past two years. A detailed review of this book and appears in a forthcoming issue.

MORE MOVIE THRILLERS

Tom Howard: *John Howard Reed*, Sydney, 1994, 2nd ed. pp., pp \$20

SUSPENSE IN THE CINEMA

Tom Howard: *John Howard Reed*, Sydney, 1994, 200 pp., pb. pp \$20

Two recent additions to the series of the Film Index publications put out by John Howard Reed. This series is strictly for those readers who are into sociology. They are *Perseus* on entry from the 1930s onwards (in 1930s film would be an exception). Each index presents a series of non-critical, though still judgemental, comments. The information provided for each entry is substantially comprehensive – statistics at complete end and some credits which include release dates, lengths and values (where known) for the U.S., U.K. and Australia.

THE OSCAR MOVIES FOURTH EDITION

Ray Pickett: *A. S. Books*, New York, 1994, 300 pp., pb. pp \$70.00

An A to Z of Academy Award winners. A very concise and comprehensive guide, providing facts about the 1920-plus feature films that have won Oscars since the awards were first introduced in 1929. The book's appendices are extremely handy. Though they include guides on the performance of Oscar winners at the box office, nominated films that lost, marginal and honorary awards, Oscar night hosts, and many more things.

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lesian photography and has the quietly desolate atmosphere of a beleaguered people emerging from starvation, but also a critique of the able-bodied truly played (and their descendants are now playing) in small Albania. It is a strong cinema geared for a popular audience.

The other significant film(s) highlighted the changes in Eastern Europe was *Art Michael's* autobiographical *Stefania Puzos* (with one of the final friends of the Ukraine, *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin* [2001]). It is a *Good Soldier Schweik* Czech 50 comedy from Russia by a Czech director who was not able to make films for five years, in combination of the cheerful and the sinister—admirable ten years ago.

The cinema represented in *Competition* always a puzzle. This year there was nothing from Southern Europe (apart, though Spain, Portugal) and France (with three) were present. There was a *Barbarella* from France (no production but nothing else from Africa. Latin America had one entry from Argentina. There were three U.S. entries (be- sides the two intro-



duced already there was *Alexandre Rodman's* *Secretary to Love* with adriatic Rasta Peace performance. While New Zealand was represented by *Heavenly Creatures*, there was no Australian film in *Competition*.

However, New Zealand and Australia were strong presences at the Festival. Besides *Heavenly Creatures*, there were screenings of *Lee Tamahori's* *Once Were Warriors* (1993) with its novel of biblical Maori/Christianism the film of its screening. *Anna Chapman's* *Calisto* (1991) filmed in the UK, and the Melbourne Festival Street Photo winner *Gangster Paradise: Australia Days* (1991).

Heavenly Creatures was decisively won a Silver Lion and showed the talent of its writer and director Peter Jackson (who spent a lot of time in interviews and press conferences explaining that he was not planning his career; that the 1994 murder case interested him and that he had not necessarily moved on from his childhood "spider stories"). It is a stylish vigorous and imaginative film best, with *Green New Warriors*, showed that creativity is alive and well in New Zealand.

The Australian film was *Geoffrey Wright's* *Melba* (2001) programmed as a *Versus Night Against Hollywood: Evernight Evernight* (1991). *Ann Kalders* *Only the Brave* (1991), *James Packer's* *Just Phish* (1991) screened the year on 1991 and *Anna Johnston's* short *teaser*, *Seven Days Under the Sun* (1991). It was a strange selection: strange (historically and in quality) by far the films from other countries.

One of the difficulties of assessing the impact of the film is knowing how many attended

screenings. (For instance, *Evernight* ... *Evernight* had only a small audience for its press screening (with a number leaving), though a good crowd for its official screening. True like *James Cameron's* *U.S.* ... popular as one of the *Versus Night* was given an early midnight screening with only 1000 turning up. The *Pearlman* (1991) series (which usually closed with press screenings of *Competition* films) was so popular with local audiences that they were given repeat performances at midnight.

Special events included screenings of *Tom and Viv* in the presence of *Marlene Richardson* and *Joanne Helen Gilbert*, an amusing comedy *Struggled* (something like no wedding and no father!) with actor *Donovan March* *Glenn*, and a restored print of *Reiss Wiener* *President's Movie* (1970). The *Australian* collection was screened several times. The retrospective women considered about twelve of King Vidor's early films ending with *Madeline* (1930).

A surprise popular success given repeat screenings was *Johnny Lavy's* *S.P.W.* (U.S. 1991) even in a more modest (and more successful?) campaign on place on the media and sales, and visitors to *Artural* from *Glenn* *Spina* youngsters are held by moments in

seven two sisters (played by *Ann Perloff* and *Blanche Delle*). *A la Pella* (with *Johnnie De Dey* and *De Night*) the *Hungarian* *Blanche* production. *Edith* (with *De Dey* and *Blanche*) *The Magic Mirror*, a screening of *Carl Mann* *We have 10th Century opera*. *De Pivotal*, in modern Budapest (with medieval backdrops) is a variation on the *Pass* legend. Difficult for those not familiar with middle-European mythology and folklore. It was still an amusing and stimulating drama.

European cinematists are on the increase. A quietly elegant and black version of a *W. P.* *Yank* play about soldiers in *Calisto* and the ghost of *Deen Smith*. *Mary McQueen* *Wanda* (with the *Minister* *Peter* [1991]) was still although all the shooting was done in *Calisto* in *Lucy* (1991). The stars include *Geoffrey Wright*, *Chaplin*, *Donald*, *James*, *Don Richardson*, *John Lynch* and *Jim Sheridan* (as *Jonathan Swift*).

The *Press Conference* are always a feature of the Festival (before particularly it is not the name of the game and where it is further occupied by the army of photographers). While there were the celebrities — *Tuan Hama*, *Jack Nicholson*, *Immanuel Ford* (smiling robotically and making a joke or two this year) — journalists asked a lot of good questions of *Geoffrey Wright* were particularly effective conversations with *Peter Jackson*, *Geoffrey Wright* and *Philip Mayes* (who was there with *Glenn* and *President* *Clayton*). The *Golden* was awarded for *Al Packer*, who was given a life award along with *Kenneth Loach* and *William* (who was especially for *Michael* *Quinn* *George* *Dennis*).

It should be mentioned on the press to the Festival that the awards ceremony was not an absolute catastrophe. It was an effective achievement. Ending an evening 45 minutes (with the journalists' guffing at the big screen showing) it

— CHAIRMAN OF PAGE 22 —



a first food shop, a discount movie at least each night and have to be shown an hour later when two of them finally get out after 50 days. They are killed by a vampire (a national celebration with all the new audience and hope). *Stephen Dorf* is the star, a young unemployed man whose reaction to the public response is *S.P.W.* (U.S. 1991). "The *Building* what?" *Lavy* is obviously a talent to look for.

The other impressive American film was *James Gray's* *First Feature* (at age 24). *Little* *Deen* (with a *Silver Lion*) which will surely receive wide release and sales.

Among the films that were not so well noticed were *Dennis Ruyli* *Intensive* *psychological* *clash* on



Negotiation

'I hear what you say, but...'



"IN THE INTERESTS OF A CO-OPERATIVE NEGOTIATION, LET ME PARAPHRASE YOU SAID, YOU'RE A FINE, LITTLE FELLOW, AND I'M GOING TO MAIL YOUR ADD TO THE BOTTOM OF THE HARBOR!" AM I RIGHT?

We negotiate from the cradle on. Sometimes, in work as in life, we postpone or avoid it, expecting pain. What follows applies whether you negotiate yourself or use an agent or lawyer. It leans to a co-operative approach that can enable both parties to do better. Mostly you negotiate with a good relationship and repeat business in mind.

Preparation – A Must

To begin, sit out for yourself on a single sheet of paper in separate columns what you want, don't want and will concede. Focus on it. You may vary this when you know more. Gather intelligence of your own, about the personalities of other deals and the attitudes of the other side. These can be gleaned from contact parties from bodies of work and individuals track records. Have respect for the other side. It shows when you don't.

Listening – An Underrated Art

New you are not so little, perhaps (referring to the characters in the small talk subtext). Good listening as one's own viewpoints are postponed their expectation for a moment. Really listen to what the other side is saying. paraphrase it back to them and ask them to confirm. It is not a trick. It shows you really are listening to what they want and are saying. It breaks trust. It provides you with valuable information and an understanding of what they need. It is the new credential for a mutually-satisfied outcome. You can avoid costly misunderstandings in deal-

ing all higher outcomes. In other "yes" can simply mean they understand what you are saying, not that they are going to part with the \$5 million you've just requested.

Asking Questions – A Key Skill

Asking questions pays due respect to the other side. Clarifies the position and provides more information. Generally, people are ready to tell where they stand. Often you don't even have to ask. You can establish ground rules that you will only agree to what they can give a good reason for. It follows that it is unwise to put positions of your own which you are unable to justify or explain. The best points derived from the good. Sometimes in answering questions, concessions are made by the other side, particularly where you have them on a roll. On reflection, it can be hard for the long haul if you told the other side to something you both know they have conceded without due thought. It depends.

Leverage

By now you will have a good idea of what the other side expects and why. It helps to know whether their priority is to get certain things or to avoid something. Is their first intention to see things in terms of similarities or of differences? At the address, across are things almost exclusively in terms of either similarities or differences. Present the latter with two options: one covering the deficiencies of the other. They will feel you by revealing pain. You may also have needed whether the other side is doing or not (stress). global or focused mainly on detail. Which side is consistent? Is age driven, interested in a good long term relationship, paid a solution or paid the money.

Putting Your Own Case

Sometimes it pays to put your position in writing, reducing ambiguity and miscommunication. Note the common ground. It fosters an environment of agreement. Cast your view succinctly in language shared to the information learned about where the other side is coming from, and what they say they want achieved. Generally, a subject is often only the strongest direct and real reasons. Easily-documented proposals undermine credibility. To ask for something you don't really want very much is to give the other side a win-win with which the whole negotiation is based on a little claiming. It can affect trust. When asking what you want or answering the other side there is a certain enthusiasm from wanting. Overcome any fear of looking stupid to provide more time to create and learn. Wait before making a point regarding what the other side has just

CLEMENT MASON'S FLORODORA FILMS — MARCH 1901

Just before Baldwin Spencer commenced his exploration of the Warwick Bioscope camera's scientific potential, a Melbourne-based vaudeville troupe made the first Australian usage of the same machine for theatrical purposes.

The musical comedy *Florodora* opened at London's Lyric Theatre on 11 November 1899¹, and was an immediate "success," with songs by Leslie Scott including "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden" and "In the Shade of the Palm", which became standards of their time. It was the first show to have an original London cast recorded more or less completely on gramophone discs² and highlights were even filmed by the British Mutoscope and Biograph Company³, to great was its popularity. *Florodora* opened with an extremely rare Australian cast at Her Majesty's Theatre in Melbourne on 15 December 1900⁴ and a mirrored the success of its British prototype.

J. C. Williamson, who brought *Florodora* to Australia, had been dabbling in movie exhibition since establishing his J. C. Williamson Anglo-American Bio-Tableau touring company in March 1900. Clement Mason was brought from London's Warwick Trading Company to supervise the company's first "War Film screenings." By March 1901, new sensations were sought to maintain its popularity, so Mason commenced the production of Australian films, featuring star performers under Williamson contracts. In this way, Australia's first domestic films of local stage stars were made.

Each scene was probably 150 feet (2 min. 30 sec.) long⁵, was shot in Melbourne, and is listed below in order of screening date:

- 1) *Florodora: The Millionaire's Song and Dance*
Features the original Melbourne cast member Hugh J. Ward. First mention of filming "the hits of *Florodora*" is in *Argus* (Melbourne), 8 March 1901, p. 8. First specific mention of Ward's "Economic Dance" is in *Argus*, 9 March 1901, p. 8.
- 2) *Collie Street, Melbourne: The Black*
Shot at 11 a.m. on 8 March 1901. Refer *Argus* (Melbourne), 5 March 1901, p. 10; *Argus*, 11 March 1901, p. 9, states "a number of local celebrities happened to be passing" in the film.
- 3) *Florodora: Burlesque of 'The Dan-oh'*
Has original Melbourne cast members Carrie Moore and George Loran. A burlesque of an adagio dance scene then appearing in a Melbourne *Coufoulli* performance, which Moore and Loran interpolated into *Florodora*. Earliest known mention of the film is in *The Age* (Melbourne), 13 March



Left: Clement Mason, producer of the *Florodora* films in Melbourne, March 1901. From *Expanded History*, 31 March 2000, p. 8. Below: Mason advertising the *Florodora* film, showing a film of William's Theatre Royal, 28 June 1901. Courtesy of W. & A. Murphy Collection, Tasmanian Library, State Library of Tasmania.

THEATRE ROYAL
THE LATEST THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS
Saturday next, June 20
—
RETURN SEASON
—
J. C. WILLIAMSON'S
BIO-TABLEAU
—

—
FLORODORA
HITS OF THE OPERA.
—

—
ANOTHER ATTRACTION
—
QUEEN'S FUNERAL
—
SOUTH AFRICAN WAR.

1901, p. 7. First screening at Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, on 16 March 1901; refer *Argus* (Melbourne), 15 March 1901, p. 8.

- 4) *Florodora: The Proscenium, Mysterious Musicians*
With George Loran and Carrie Moore from the original Melbourne cast. First mentioned in *Argus* (Melbourne), 16 March 1901, p. 14. It was shown at the Athenaeum on the same day.
- 5) *Florodora: The Proscenium, Mysterious Musicians* (No. 2) *Argus* (Melbourne), 16 March 1901, p. 14, refers to "two of the items in connection with the 'Proscenium' being on the night's film programme. Featured George Loran and Carrie Moore.
- 6) *Florodora: Double feature: "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden"*
With the original Melbourne cast members. First mentioned in *The Age* (Melbourne), 23 March 1901, p. 10. *The Age*, 27 March 1901, p. 12, indicated that a 5 inch diameter "Cinetograph" photographic cylinder of the song was introduced into the performance, and that it was "the intention of the management to work it with the film."
- 7) H.M. & Bioscope. Hugh J. Ward's *Gentle Song: Homage Dance*
First mentioned in *The Age* (Melbourne), 26 March 1901, first screened on that evening.
- 8) *Florodora: Undersold scene*
With Grace Palmer and Wallace Brownlow from the original Melbourne cast. First mentioned in *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 1 May 1901.

Added to the Bio-Tableau set after the company's departure from Melbourne. See also *Tasmanian News* (Hobart), 22 June 1901, pp. 2 & 3; *The Mercury* (Hobart), 28 June 1901, p. 3.

Mason's exhibition company with the *Florodora* films left Melbourne on 29 March 1901⁶, touring Australia some time ahead of the "love" production on most of its routes, then serving as an advertising "trailer" for the stage show.

The British Mutoscope and Biograph Company's film of the earlier London cast performing "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden" from *Florodora* was shown in Melbourne in April 1901. According to *The Bulletin*, the local production and the local films indicated that our cinema companies were then favourably with London's

The ladies (in the British film) are (sympathetic, not so frisky as Joan Rice in the American), and, as it does not look anything like so lively. The ladies play too much at the audience with their sides. Maybe the film was (taken) at a crude stage of the piece. In Australia, we get the best bit of London's 1941 night.¹⁹

In Brisbane, the *Norodora* films arrived at His Majesty's Theatre on 1 June 1941²⁰, more than two months before the "live" production. They "be so much a mild rush to see as to His Majesty's Theatre, where business has been good all along", said the *Melbourne Herald*.

Besides, a pleasantly hopeful way of seeing the Stuart play for some time, are evidently glad to get a glimpse of the Melbourne show, even if only through the medium of an (up) to date stage lantern.²¹

The *Norodora* films were always shown as a group, and invariably were enthusiastically received. None of them, sadly, are known to survive, and the only known "trills" in film are on a Rex Taberna advertising poster for Hobart screenings on 28 June 1941²², held in the State Library of Tasmania's J. W. B. Murphy poster collection (see illustration).

CLEMENT MASON'S BACKGROUND

A forgotten but pivotal pioneer of Australian film, Mason claimed to have been experimenting with motion pictures in Britain since 1892.²³

After working for the Warwick Trading Company and making the 1900-1 tour of Australia, he relinquished the management of Williamson's Rex-Taberna to a Mr W. Howard late in 1901²⁴, returning to Britain. There, he gave shows at London's Empire and Albionville Theatres in association with Charles Urban's film enterprises.²⁵ He returned for another Australian tour with Williamson's Rex-Taberna Company late in 1904, showing Russo-Japanese War coverage and local film of the 1904 Melbourne Cup.²⁶

Early in 1905, Mason shot film of New Zealand geoglyphs in association with a consortium named Hickley.²⁷ During a spell in London late in 1905, he worked on Charles Urban's feature-length moviegraph, *Living London*²⁸, which was a great money-maker for Johnson & Gibson's shows in Australia, inducing them to produce their famous 1906 *Story of the Kelly Gang*.²⁹

Mason finally settled in Australia in about August 1907³⁰, taking the lease on Sydney's Queen Hall for his London Rex-Taberna Company for two years and opening the Clement Mason Trading Company there, one of Sydney's earliest film-and-equipment exchanges.³¹ He also ran the earliest known Australian movie-makers' school in April 1908³², and manufactured minor precursors of his own design at Merrylands in July 1910.³³ Several "Mason" prophecies survive in poster collections.

Mason's was one of the few Sydney film exchanges to come joining the "combine" around 1912. He distributed the output of the smaller European producers like Nordisk, Heima, Hepworth, Windsor, Italia and Cines.³⁴ After Clement Mason died during the First World War, the business was continued by his widow³⁵ into the early 1930s as Mason's Super Films.

NEXT INSTALLMENT

In May 1961, the First Commonwealth Parliament was opened by the Duke of York in Melbourne. The Royal Tour associated with that event was covered by no less than six film production companies in both Australia and New Zealand, resulting in several documentaries exceeding an hour in length. It coincided with the first peak of pioneering film production in Australia, as Australia now moves towards globalisation, 1961's Royal Tour emphasises our nation's changes over the last century, and forms the focus of our next installment. ■

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NOTES

- 1 That is, it was someone the length of any of the *Amos* film, it was far more than 30 minutes, and it frequently was the sole film shown on a night's programme.
- 2 Bruce Cox, *The History of Motion Photography*, Ash & Co. Ltd, London, 1961, p. 40.
- 3 John Barnes, *Filming the First War*, Batsford Press, London, 1952, p. 110.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *The Australian Photographic Review*, 22 May 1901, pp. 22-3. Salomon Army acquired Warwick post in April 1901. Mason probably the month before, and Baldwin Spencer probably in February 1901.
- 6 John Barnes, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-70.
- 7 See reference (5).
- 8 *The Australian Photographic Review*, 22 May 1901, pp. 34-5.
- 9 D. J. Mulvaney & J. H. Galloway, *Is Black That Is Near*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1985, p. 28.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 48.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 77.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 120.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 120.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 123.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 124.
- 18 *Canberra Phoenix*, Melbourne, No. 3758, April 1932, p. 28.
- 19 *Melbourne & Galleys*, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-4.
- 20 *The South Australian Register* (Adelaide), 13 March 1910. "The Edison Legal Expedition".
- 21 *Spencer Papers*, Fox Brown Museum, Oxford. Galleys to Spencer correspondence 14 September 1900.
- 22 *Cinema Papers*, No. 56, December 1941, pp. 33-4. "Australia's First Film" (part 4, Chen Long and Pat Laughlin).
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- 24 *Spencer Papers*, *op. cit.* Galleys to Spencer, 23 October 1900.
- 25 *Ibid.* Galleys to Spencer, 18 December 1900.
- 26 A. C. Hilditch Papers, Cambridge University Library. Spencer collection, 1 December 1900.
- 27 Alan M. Woyle, "The Baldwin Spencer & Recordings of Australian Aboriginal Song", in *Memoirs of the National Museum*, Melbourne, No. 24, December 1915, pp. 7-46.
- 28 W. B. Spencer, *Field Journal of Spencer-Gillies Expedition* (held by Mitchell Library, Sydney) entry for 22 March 1901, p. 15.
- 29 *See Baldwin Spencer, Wandering in Wild Australia*, Macmillan, London, 1924, pp. 155-60.
- 30 W. B. Spencer, *Field Journal*, *op. cit.* entry for 4 April 1901 (pp. 24-5).
- 31 *Ibid.*, entry for 4 April 1901 (p. 3).
- 32 *The Age*, Melbourne, 8 July 1902. "Australian Musings".
- 33 *Life*, Melbourne, October 1904, p. 1805. "How 'We Wrote Our Book'".
- 34 W. B. Spencer, *Field Journal*, *op. cit.* entry for 3 April 1901 (p. 65).
- 35 Galleys' diary, 4 April 1901, notes that 24 recordings were sent home that

day, *Spencer* or *Wanderings* (1982) states that there were 36, of which 2 books on the cinema journey. These notes on Australia and Melbourne are duplications made by J. H. Mt. Davidson of Barrett & Co. on Australia in 1982. The originals appear to be on loan.

36 Information from B. Mayle, 1983 (personal correspondence) and from A. Carroll, 1994.

37 Adelaide was owned by Royal Gang and placed in the South Australia area there used by Gillen in his Adelaide lecture on 24 July 1982, the film in the Museum of Victoria may have been from the area or possibly.

38 W. B. Spencer, *Field Journal*, op. cit., 8 April 1981, p. 3.

39 F. J. Gillen, *Gillen's Diary*, Libraries Board of S. A., 1948, p. 12. The Selkirk Army and John B. Brown were to have had commercial union film related material.

40 *Cinema Papers* No. 105, October 1984, pp. 14-15. "Australia's First Film", pp. 16, 18, Chris Long.

41 F. J. Gillen, op. cit., p. 21. See Barbara Spencer: *Wanderings in Wild Australia*, p. 279.

42 *Life*, Melbourne, October 1984, p. 1099.

43 F. J. Gillen, op. cit., p. 33.

44 *Ibid*, p. 58.

45 W. B. Spencer, *Field Journal*, op. cit., 3 May 1981, p. 7. See Barbara Spencer, *Wanderings in Wild Australia*, op. cit., p. 279.

46 F. J. Gillen, op. cit., p. 72.

47 *Ibid*, p. 76.

48 *Ibid*, p. 81.

49 *Ibid*, p. 85.

50 Malvern & Colley, op. cit., p. 121.

51 *Ibid*, p. 213.

52 *Ibid*, p. 217.

53 *Ibid*, p. 218. See also Spencer Papers, op. cit., Gillen to Spencer, 13 April 1982.

54 *Ibid*. See also Spencer Papers, Mitchell Library, Sydney. Spencer to Rex Leslie (film), 24 April 1982.

55 *The Age*, 8 July 1982. "Australian Aborigines", *The Age*, 8 July 1982. "Australian Aborigines".

56 W. B. Spencer & F. J. Gillen, *The Wonders of Central Australia*, Macmillan, London, 1984, p. xv.

57 Malvern & Colley, op. cit., p. 218. See also Carroll's *Aborigines*, Melbourne, April 1982, p. 38.

58 *Ibid*, p. 213.

59 *The Age*, Melbourne, 15 July 1982.

60 *The South Australian Register*, 24 July 1982, p. 4, 15 July 1982, pp. 4, 7.

61 Malvern & Colley, op. cit., p. 121.

62 Australian Archives, Mitchell, ACT. Department of External Affairs correspondence, CR1621, (IDM 181443). Report on J. P. Campbell's work by D. B. Edwards, 8 March 1913, p. 2, June 1989 list of film funded over to Fred Spencer by Campbell, who stated N. T. "with the official press". Campbell had been Commonwealth Government's official cinematographer until December 1911.

63 *Cinema Filmworks*, Melbourne, April 1981, p. 37.

64 *Ibid*, pp. 24-32.

65 Information from A. Carroll, 1994.

66 Ads Bevan, *Talk to Her* (2 Post, Hawthorne, London, 1934), p. 34.

67 Re issued by Fred Spencer on an "Opal" label, 1912, (DPAI 22-98-23).

68 *The Bulletin*, Sydney, 27 April 1901, p. 28. All of the films exhibited by Wild and Prudden were the films produced at the French Melbourn and Biograph Company.

69 *Argus*, Melbourne, 13 December 1908. French, Melbourne, 26 December 1908, p. 704.

70 *The Sage*, Sydney, 28 April 1904, p. 8.

71 50 feet was the standard worldwide camera lens at the time. See ref. 10.

72 *Argus*, Melbourne, 15 March 1901. "Amusement".

73 *The Bulletin*, Sydney, 27 April 1901, p. 28.

74 *The Courier*, Brisbane, 1 June 1901, p. 4. "Mr J. C. Williamson's Two Tablets".

75 French, Melbourne, 4 June 1901, p. 494.

76 *Star* Library of Tasmania. J. B. Murphy poster collection, Pg. 41.

77 *The Sage*, Sydney, 28 April 1904, p. 4, and that Mason had "the four cinemaograph machines, and made the second 50 years ago".

78 Queensland Times, Ipswich, 30 October 1901, p. 1, 13 October 1901. "The Two Tablets".

79 *Tasmanian News*, Hobart, 4 May 1902. "Mr J. C. Williamson's Two Tablets".

80 *Ibid*, 9 May 1901, 9 May 1902, p. 2.

81 Information from Cliff Sorey, Wellington, New Zealand, June 1994.

82 Information from Ross Cooper, Melbourne, 1997.

83 *New Daily Yearbook of Motion Pictures 1932-33*. "Early Days in Australia" by Willard Johnson.

84 Acknowledgments for Mason's loan of Queen's Hall are recorded through *Argus* 1967's issues of *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

85 *Express*, Sydney, 11 March 1921, p. 13. "A Responder".

86 *The Express*, Sydney, 28 April 1989.

87 *Theatrical Argus*, Sydney, 30 July 1918, p. 4.

88 *The Theatre Magazine*, Sydney, 1 December 1918, p. 48.

89 *Ibid* see also *Express*, 14 January 1914, p. 13.

BRIEFLY

FROM PAGE 2

New Director for Film Queensland

Ross Gurney has been appointed Director of Film Queensland.

Gurney, who has more than 25 years' experience in the film and television industry as producer, director and writer, was formerly Chief Executive, Film Victoria, and General Executive Producer, ABC Drama (Melbourne). He is presently a member of the Board of George Roper and of the House Advisory Committee of the Victoria College of the Arts, Film and TV School.

Gurney's producing credits include the more recent *Life's a Wild Thing* and *A Thousand Miles* and the feature film *Warm Nights On a Shore Among Trees*. *Argentine* and *Shark's Mouth* at The National Centre.

Gurney has been executive producer on a number of television series including *The Shepherdess*, *House Rules*, *Inside Partridge*, *The Man ... The Planes* and *The Four Minute Mile*. A notable producer of *Darkness of the Gods* and production executive on *Battle*.

Gurney took up the position of Director, Film Queensland on 24 October. He replaces Richard Stewart, who left to become the Chief Executive Officer, New Zealand Film Commission earlier this year.

Miramax acquires world rights to *Coal*

Further to the *Melbourne Mail* in this issue, Miramax Films and the *Bureau of Film Finance Corporation* (BFFC) will join forces to finance *John's* as Australian comedy. Once Miramax has worldwide rights with the exception of Australia New Zealand.

Coal is a quality based comedy about an ageing white director who stages a production of Mozart's opera "Don Pasquale" in a mountainous Italian. Directed by Jeffe (Melbourne) and *The Ethnology* (Export) from a screenplay by Louis

Rosen (Map of the Human Heart). *Coal* will feature Barry Hess (Society Director) who also appeared in the original *Wings* production. Additional material notes are still to be sent. Miramax's Harvey Weinstein said:

Miramax Films has a deep and ongoing commitment to the Australian industry and I am pleased to be working with the BFFC to bring this great Australian comedy to the screen.

The *Coal* Executive of the BFFC, John Morris, said: "Miramax has been an enthusiastic buyer of Australian film. We now welcome its involvement as a key investor."

The deal was negotiated by Weinstein and Executive Vice President of Acquisitions Tony Goffard on behalf of Miramax and executive producer Preston Vass and BFFC General Investment Manager Christina Hughes on behalf of the BFFC.

Coal will be co-financed by Miramax and the BFFC with the participation of Film South Wales. Film & Television Office, Richard Robinson will produce, with Preston Vass as executive producer. The project begins principal photography in Sydney in January 1995.

TO ADVERTISE
IN CINEMA PAPER CALL
(08) 499 8019

CATY ROBINSON FROM PAGE 21

There are real tensions between effective cultural development, which is about taking risks, letting people fail, make mistakes and learning from them, on the one hand, and performance requirements, on the other. The whole cultural area is the sharpest edge of tension in all of the work the AFC does.

So, there is no extent to which it's back to the drawing board on that one. I'm not suggesting that we will do another Review, I'm not convinced that the review process is a way of solving the problems. But we will be talking to people about what we think our options are, and how we might pursue them. We need to be consultative, not give people the opportunity to react and respond. Indeed, we will have to say what they have as to how to proceed.

The AFC is at a real crossroads, and not only because, like all film agencies in the federal arena, we have a four-yearly review early in 1995. We are also in a position where, because of our changed activities, particularly in the Film Development area, our revenue is declining significantly. As well, we had Film taken away from us when the last review of the AFC was approved. The additional money we have had since from the Commonwealth has been specifically targeted.

One of the staff described what we do as a bit like doing a juggling act: very thin, very close to make sure it all goes around. There is a view that we are doing too much, and we are not actually doing what we do well enough.

I would like the opportunity to have some more money, but we must be realistic about these things. Where government is

recent times have been increasing funds, they have been doing it in very targeted ways. They are not giving places like us lump sums of money and saying, "Go away and do what you want with it." They are attaching very specific loads of requirements to the expenditure.

Does government ever make comments about what it feels you should or shouldn't support?

They tend to steer away from that, though they took quite an interventionist role in the *Internally Australian* years. They had very firm views about what they wanted, which is not to say that they didn't listen to advice from us.

If there is a broad view that can be attributed to the government about the work of the AFC, it's that our development and production work is the most important. But that's not meant to imply there isn't support for the co-production activities, the marketing and the cultural work, or indeed appreciation of the policy work we do. Some of the biggest internal our Research and Information publications are people in government.

There is a sense in which the government thinks we are doing the right thing. But the environment in Australia and in the industry keeps changing. It behooves us to be looking at whether and how we need to change with it. I think it's safe to assume that the AFC won't inevitably be doing its two years' work all of the things we're currently doing.

TIM READ FROM PAGE 25

Do you ever look at what hasn't been recommended to gauge what the project co-sponsors are rejecting?

Yes, though you catch me early on in my stewardship, and I haven't had a lot of chance to do that. But I do intend to keep myself informed.

In both Melbourne and Sydney, a regular list in proposed projects that have been rejected, together with the names of the filmmakers. If anything stands out to me, I'll look into it. That list also goes to each of the Film Commission's Board meetings. I have been asked at Board meetings why such and such was turned down, or why something else was recommended. The Board can take whatever level of interest it wants in the process.

Are any new decisions in the way assessment will go? Well, we have to find an answer to this problem of 930 applications a year. We spend in the vicinity of \$188,000 commissioning assessments on projects, and a may go through the \$200,000 mark this year.

We have to have a discussion with the filmmaking community about whether we can keep on doing that. It's not pleasant for those who are in the 25 to 30% which obviously won't get funded, but maybe these projects could receive a different sort of assessment procedures than those which may or will receive funding. We may need to streamline our assessment procedure to allow as the facility, subject to transparency and no accountancy, all dealing more quickly and cooperatively with the bottom 25 to 30% than to find more time to dedicate to stuff which may or should be funded.

I don't foresee, however, the Commission going for a sort of maintained pre-assessment committee, assessing all our projects on a rolling basis. I don't think it's necessarily the most effective

way of doing it. It runs the risk of being more cumbersome and even more expensive than the system we already have.

I also foreshadow the need to discuss with the filmmaking community the practice that the Commission has of not only sending every assessment we commission back to the filmmaker, but having it signed. As far as we know, we are the only agency that does both of those things, and we are starting to experience resource reluctance. In some cases, they're rebelling, and, in others, they are starting to feel the need to write assessments which perhaps don't deal with the issues as fully as they might need to be dealt with.

Isn't there the danger with unsigned assessments of returning to the legendary assessments of the AFDC and AFC which were almost designed to cause people to jump off tall buildings? Because they were unsigned, there was no reluctance on the part of assessors to be specifically damning in their comments.

Well, yes, that's part of the other side of the coin, part of the management problem that you need to deal with.

I can only say that we are the only agency that releases signed assessments, and we are experiencing some difficulty with the process. We need to discuss it.

Another issue, and I'm speaking a revolutionarily as I don't have any proof, is the suspicion that one of the reasons why we are getting 930 submissions a year is because we've become, and I don't say this pejoratively, a free assessment process. "Ah, you want to get your project assessed? Send it into the Commission. It will go through its paces."

Our highly professional assessment service is running at the limit of its capacity.

What is the basis for choosing outside assessors?

It's very diverse. We have assessors whom we would consider to be [helpful] script analysts, assessors who can deal with marketing questions, or with the capacity of the project to get funding or to get made, who can look at it from a visualisation point of view. Of course, any project that comes before us with elements of indigenous representation gets sent to an indigenous assessor.

So, it's a very broadly-based assessment procedure. We call upon the various talents of an eclectic group of about 150 people. It's being added to all of the time.

Given the criticisms of inconsistency in the AFC's handling of the second narrative features of John Hughes and Alekx Vella, what exactly are the AFC's feature-film guidelines and how they changed?

I'd like the opportunity to deal with that particular point, and to put some information on the table.

John Hughes' film *Traps* [1998] was funded as a \$34,000 feature-length documentary. Hughes' *What I Have Written* has been funded as a fully-dramatised, highly-emotional narrative feature at \$11.5m. The film was in completely different categories.

As far as this Commission, and this branch, is concerned, *What I Have Written* is a feature film in the sense that is currently understood by most people. *Traps* was not a feature film in the same way. John Hughes came to us as a first-time feature-film director. End of story. Finish.

But directors who had their first feature funded under IORA, without any government investment, have been rejected by the AFC because they don't qualify as "first-time feature-film" directors.

For me sure I follow the link with IORA.

Why should the AFC rule out someone who made a leap with IORA money, but not someone who made one with AFC money? Where the funding comes from shouldn't alter the definition of who is a first-time feature-film director.

FI try again. *Traps* was funded as a \$34,000 project in a documentary category. It became a feature-length documentary in its final form.

As far as Alekx Vella is concerned, he was given something like \$100,000 to make a 30 minute film. It later turned out to be something much larger. In the case of both projects, the premise for the original decisions were in different grounds.

The *Life of Harry Dune* [Vella] and *What I Have Written* were presented as \$1m plus narrative feature film scripts and were assessed as such. It is hopefully a point that anyone can agree with; different things were being considered in different times.

Look, obviously, there is some confusion about whether or not we are interested in only first-time feature-film directors. The most recent Board decision (July 1998) about that issue was weak which imply a "preference" for first-time feature-film directors, which does not want to exclude the possibility of second-time feature-film directors coming up for consideration.

I can investigate the back policy history on this if you like, but my feeling is that the Commission was never only exclusively considering first-time directors. There was only ever a preference for first-time directors.

But people have been rejected, or not considered, purely on the grounds they were applying for a second feature.

Well, I'd better stand corrected on that, and I'm in a state happy to do so.

What you've said to me means that we need to make sure the guidelines that will operate in a few months' time are extremely clear. There is a point about consistency and people understanding what the Film Commission's criteria are.

At the same time, we need to be flexible. We operate a number of criteria so far as feature-film funding is concerned, of which whether or not a director has directed a feature is only one. If we receive, for example, an offbeat project from a first-time feature-film director, but two others from filmmakers who have directed a feature already, do we knock them out and fund the first-come purely because of one aspect of our funding criteria?

We are between a rock and a hard place. There is a constant dynamic between flexibility of guidelines and consistency of process, which is one reason why I went my colleagues and I to go out into the filmmaking community to have these discussions. It's necessary to have critical discourse on the one hand, and the practical discourse on the other.

I'm a little sorry that it's not better known that we financed *Only The Brave*, *Korany* [Lawrence Johnston, documentary, 1994], *Kompe Tsawep* [Gardiner Wright, 1992], *Proof* [Jacelyn Moorhouse, 1991] and a whole lot of other things. Our corporate culture of shyism almost amounts to hiding our light under a bushel. We've been dogmatic in the organisations that took the principal risks. That's another thing that has to change.

Are you disappointed that filmmakers the AFC supports are so reticent to ever mention or thank the AFC?

Well, we can't put words into filmmakers' mouths, but we can make damn sure that, apart of blatant propaganda, which backsides on you in the end, our story is better known.

We look to the future with a great degree of excitement and enthusiasm. I think the Commission is going to flourish very well as a co-merged organisation in the next few years. We are going to have vigorous debate and make a good contribution to all sorts of film and multi-media practices in the near future. If we can just bear the workload question, we have the capacity to respond to filmmakers, to give rise ideas, to be a pathway organisation. I'm feeling really good about it.

WAL SAUNDERS FROM PAGE 41

in order to network among themselves and with their respective state film bodies. Funded under a three-year co-operative agreement between the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), Saunders says that the money for the independent Branch is being used to pay his salary, an assistant's wage, administrative costs and two contractors at Open Channel in Melbourne and Mimeo in Sydney.

The Prime Minister's cultural statement on 18 October affirmed the importance of film, print, art and theatre in defining the national character. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders – Australia's indigenous people – remain anxious to have a chance to tell their stories. The two points of view are not mutually exclusive. Whether Australians will watch an "Aboriginal" film or a Chinese programme, as opposed to something else, is more a matter of personal choice than any high amounts about needing a cultural imperative. I would think both the audience and Aboriginals should be given that choice and chance.

FFC FUNDING DECISIONS

June 84

CHILDREN'S MINI-SERIES

THE BARGE FROM DOVER (TV-14)

(1) Will work/Australian Embassy/ABC/Telepictures Productions Executive producers: Anne Thompson/Telepictures Productions/Peter Edgar Phil Jones/Telepictures/Steve Spence Creative Consultant: Wendy MacLeod Rating: A 10 year old Australian/Pakistani/Pakistani producer of several anglophone films is now producing another in England, and is actually working hard to improve himself. "The Barge" is a Black/White/Black film. It's a story about a boy who has been in the British Empire since 1940. (2) Square miles of excellent footage.

SLAD BAGE

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A PANEL OF TEN FILM REVIEWERS HAS RATED A SELECTION OF THE LATEST RELEASES ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, THE LATTER BEING THE OPTIMUM RATING (A DASH MEANS NOT SEEN). THE CRITICS ARE: BILL COLLINS (DAILY MIRROR, SYDNEY); SAROSA HALL (THE BULLETIN); PAUL BARRIS ("BT", THE AGE, 2008); IYAN HUGHINSON (SEVEN NETWORK); RONALD-SON; STEVE JAMES (THE ADLAIDE ADVERTISER); WILL JILBERT (THE AGE); SCOTT MURRAY; TOM ERAN (THE SYDNEY AGE); DAVID STRATHORN (PARADE); AND DEAN WILLIAMS (THE AUSTRALIAN).

MOVIE/ Director	Bill Collins	Sarosa Hall	Paul Barris	Ronald-Son	Steve James	Will Jilbert	Scott Murray	Tom Eran	David Strathorn	Dean Williams	Average
BOY HOOD Philip Seelby	—	—	8	—	—	3	—	6	5	—	4
COUNTRY LIFE Michael Blackmore	—	8	5	6	3	7	2	3	8	—	5.3
LA CREVE Caline Serres	—	—	—	6	—	7	8	6	5	—	6.6
QUARANTINE WITH HER WOMEN Abbie Light	—	—	3	7	—	7	—	6	—	—	6.1
THE ELASTICONES Brian Levant	—	4	1	3	7	3	—	4	—	—	4.1
POORER BUMP Robert Zemeckis	8	8	3	7	—	2	—	3	8	—	5.6
POW Rafal Zielinski	—	6	6	—	—	—	—	6	8	—	4.5
RETTYBORN Ronald E. Maxwell	7	—	3	8	—	8	8	3	—	7	6.6
GO THER Ross Trench	8	7	8	6	7	4	—	7	8	—	6.4
GRIP Linda Ardolino	4	—	6	—	7	4	—	—	—	3	5.1
THE INNOCENT John Schlesinger	—	—	3	4	—	4	—	3	—	—	3
IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU Andrew Bergman	6	—	3	4	6	3	—	—	5	—	4.2
LASTING MENTORS Ken Loach	—	8	6	8	—	3	—	3	8	—	6.8
LOVE AND HUMAN REMAINS Diego Arcand	8	6	3	6	—	3	—	7	8	8	6.3
LUCKY BREAK Ben Lewin	—	6	3	—	3	3	4	3	5	6	4.4
MATHIEUX Barker Schroeder	8	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	7	2	5.1
NATURAL BORN KILLERS Oliver Stone	9	4	3	3	7	1	1	8	6	4	4.6
THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS Henry Selick	3	4	3	6	—	3	—	4	3	—	3.9
LOUNGE DE BOULE Alain Resnais	—	7	—	—	—	4	3	8	7	7	7
THE OTHER WIFE Curtis Hanson	8	7	—	7	6	7	—	3	7	—	6.3
LE GEL BEN STOLER Paolo Sorrentino	—	—	—	—	—	8	—	7	4	—	6.3
THE SPECIALIST Luis Llorens	—	—	—	1	5	3	—	—	0	3	3.2
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT II Bud Friedman	8	6	4	4	—	3	—	—	4	7	5.4
TON & YU Brian Gilbert	9	—	4	—	6	4	—	—	3	3	6
THESE COLOURS PLEASE Krzysztof Kieslowski	—	—	6	—	—	10	8	—	8	—	8.5
THEY ARE James Cameron	8	4	3	3	7	1	6	6	7	—	5.2



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the last thing I want to do inside the 15th precinct is blow out the windows.



Brian J. Reynolds

Director of Photography



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NYPD Blue is a great show to shoot because we've practically blown out the rule book. The camera itself is a very curious character. To jump in the gut and relieve 11 variations of edge light, and intensity, no fail. The film that we use in this is AGFA XTR 150. It's a lower contrast film, yet it's a film that has a great total range. XTR 150 lets me light by eye and not worry about if I blow or blow out windows. I really believe it's one of the best films for telecine transfer. When I'm done shooting, there's a nice fat negative for postproduction, which gives me a lot of latitude. I'm not locked into "easy release" situations, and the lower contrast gives me total control over the blacks and highlights. AGFA XTR 150 helps me work faster and with more confidence. And most importantly, it looks great.

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